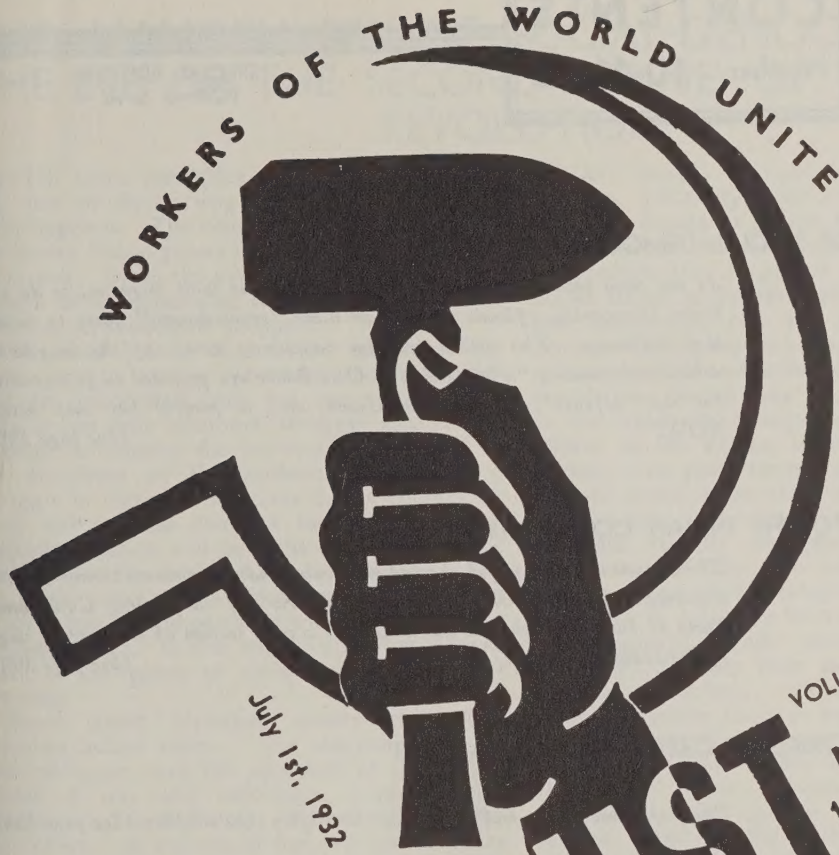

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THE MANOEUVRES OF SOCIAL-DEMOCRACY ON THE EVE OF THE SECOND ROUND OF WAR AND REVOLUTION

THE crisis intensifies, the efforts of capitalism to find a way out become more and more hopeless. The construction of Socialism in the Soviet Union grows ever more quickly on the other side. Since the events in the Far East the danger of an imperialist war against the Soviet Union is an immediate prospect.

We stand before the heaviest collisions, the most gigantic struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, that has ever taken place. This is not only economic struggle against the attempt to transfer the burdens of the crisis to the shoulders of the proletariat, or only a struggle of class against class in one country. A truly international clash of the two classes is preparing, which will be a decisive battle in the struggle for the capitalist, or revolutionary, way out of the crisis. This will be a military collision of an extent and importance which the world has not yet known. A new and greatly strengthened wave of the epoch of wars and revolutions is arriving.

These great historical events cast their shadows before them. The sharpening of the class struggle, and the approach of the second round of war and revolution, impels Social-Democracy immediately to employ "left" manœuvres, on the eve of the new revolutionary crisis, to hold the masses back, and prevent them entering the struggle under the leadership of the C.P. Social-Democracy carried out its task to prevent the overthrow of capitalism, as the chief social support of the bourgeoisie previously, chiefly by openly opposing any struggle, by declaring it unnecessary, or a senseless "putsch." Struggle against the war! Unnecessary; there can be no talk of any war dangers. At the most the threat is from the side of the Soviet Union. Struggle for economic demands in the period of the crisis! Impossible; all classes must make sacrifices during the crisis. These were their arguments, this was basically the position of Social-Democracy, but now the situation intensifies. The revolutionising of the working class assumes wider forms. A still greater intensification is to come. The Social-Democratic workers also press forward to struggle against wage cuts and the capitalist offensive. They desire to fight against Fascism, and they are against the war on the Soviet Union.

In these conditions Social-Democracy has recourse to certain weapons from the arsenal of its "left" wing. It appears in a new uniform; whereas, yesterday, the war danger was an invention circulated by the Bolsheviks, to-day it is immediate. Whereas, yesterday, the only place from which the danger of war came was the Soviet Union, to-day they talk about intervention, and apparently, call for the Soviet Union's defence. Whereas, yesterday, economic struggle was impossible and strike-breaking tactics were resorted to, to-day they try to place themselves at the head, to disorganise; call for general strikes in the future, to prevent the struggle to-day; even place themselves at the head of a general strike, when the C.P. is leading it with every prospect of victory (Poland) to make it harmless to the bourgeoisie, by killing it. Whereas, yesterday, the unemployed were only men of a second-rate category, to-day, they are beginning in Germany to reduce the contribution of unemployed trade union members to 10 pfennings, to keep them in the reformist trade unions. Whereas, yesterday, the pretended struggle against Fascism was limited to support for the State (which is becoming more Fascist) as the "lesser evil," now they begin to rattle the paper sabre against the Von Papen Government and operate the "united front," in the form of the Iron Front, and from that they proceed to speak about coalition with the Communists (Kautsky) to whom, however, they put as a condition—the renunciation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. All this is undertaken to continue the tactic of the "lesser evil" and prevent the further desertion of the masses to the Communist camp.

These manœuvres of the Social-Democratic leaders are themselves an indication that serious events are approaching, even if other evidence of this were not forthcoming. These "left" manœuvres, which are being carried out on the entire front, in all the most important countries, are nothing else than the support of the bourgeoisie, by the Social-Democratic leaders in a different form, to suit the changed situation.

Take the central question, the struggle of the Socialist system (Soviet Union) with the capitalist system. At the outset of the relative stabilisation, the most "left" leader of the Second International, Otto Bauer, declared, to frighten middle class respectability, that in the period after the world war, the rulers were Pacifists, and the Soviet Union prepared the revolutionary war.

"But this Pacifism of the rulers and leaders is opposed to-day by *military revolutionary counter-tendencies* as in the previous century. The bearer of these tendencies is Bolshevism. Its objective is civil war, which will transform into a war of revolutionary nations against the counter-revolutionary ones" (Kampf, 1925, Nos. 8-9, p. 282). Even at the beginning of the economic crisis, the Second International held that war threatened from the side of the U.S.S.R. Even then it (the U.S.S.R.) was still characterised as "imperialist." After the onslaught of the Chinese militarists on the Chinese-Eastern Railway, all Social-Democratic newspapers wrote of "Red Imperialism," which was threatening peace. The appeal issued by the Berlin D.P.C. of the German Social-Democratic Party on the 28.7.1929 declared:

> "A country which desires to make itself free from foreign domination, which desires to finally be master in its own house, in its own country, is branded by the Communists as a disturber of the peace. *The imperialism of Soviet Russia has brought about this conflict.*"

After Japan's onslaught on China, "Vorwärts" wrote that a secret Treaty existed between Japan and the Soviet Union, for the parcelling out of "spheres of influence" in Manchuria. On the other hand, they write in a provocative way about the Soviet Union "drawing in its horns," to Japanese imperialism.

In this whole period, during which the danger of war did not exist for the Second International, they directly agitated against the Soviet Union, in the sharpest way, while the war against the Soviet Union was being practically prepared. Social-Democracy, which actively participated in this preparation, as the trials of the Mensheviks and interventionists clearly proved, fulfilled the task of covering up and justifying this policy ideologically.

Now the Second International suddenly writes in its resolution:

> "The Japanese armies are now concentrated on the frontier of Soviet Russia. This is a threat to world peace which the workers cannot regard idly."

And in another place:

> "The workers will declare themselves in solidarity with the defence of the Soviet Union if she is attacked, and answer the attack on peace." ("Arbeiter Zeitung," 21.5.32).

Why this sudden change? We are already in close proximity to the imperialist onslaught on the Soviet Union. The widest masses are already clear on this and excited by it. Now it is necessary to hold them back by all means, whether by the most brutal violence on the one hand, or especially with "radical" phrases on the other.

The contrast of the attitude of the Second International now, and before the world war is interesting. In 1914 also, the Second International declared against the war, and threatened that war would lead to revolution. But to-day it has "developed" very much "further." To-day it also speaks quite "radically," but does not announce the resolution, even as a pretence. The most decisive question is that whereas the Second International in 1914 promoted the war by its passivity before the outbreak of hostilities, to-day it does the same thing *actively;* it provides the ideological armour for war; and by its participation in the bourgeois organs of State power it plays its part in the practical organisation of war.

This is clear when we examine the appeal of the Disarmament Conference in Zurich, and see what they concretely propose in the resolution of the Executive of the Second International.

Let us recall the manner in which the League of Nations supported Japan in its onslaught on China. It did not do this completely openly, but made one or two conditions to the Japanese. This was only done to quieten the resistance of the revolutionary people of China. This swindle is exploded. Now the Second International tries to represent the League of Nations as "helpless" and writes that "its authority has been undermined." As if the League of Nations at any time had any intention of proceeding against Japan and was only prevented from doing so by lack of forces! In actuality the whole "action" of the League of Nations was nothing else than a concealment of the fact that the imperialist powers are *allies* of Japan, daily supplying her with munitions, and at the same time preparing the onslaught on the U.S.S.R. from the west. "The authority of the League of Nations is undermined," because the masses have already seen through the swindle, and the Disarmament Conference in Geneva has shown the "desire" for disarmament of all the imperialist powers. They have not succeeded in concealing from the masses that the imperialists systematically supply Japan with munitions because of the exposures of the Communist press, step by step, on the basis of the reports of worker correspondents, dragging it into the light of day.

At this dangerous moment for the imperialist governments, the Second International leaps into the breach, organises its "Disarmament Conference," puts forward "new demands."

It demands the following:

1. The immediate unconditional evacuation of Shanghai and Manchuria by the Japanese forces.

2. Should Japan refuse, the recall of all Ambassadors and Consuls from Japan.

3. Where necessary, the operation of economic and financial sanctions, if Japan is not prepared to do that which is necessary in the interests of world peace. ("Arbeiter Zeitung," 19.5.1932).

Are these demands not very "radical"? Are they not a guarantee for the maintenance of peace? But the Second International is still more "extreme":

> "If, despite all this, Japan refuses to cease its preparations for attack, and threats, then the Second International will appeal to the I.F.T.U. to prevent the manufacture and transport of munitions, together with it, and resist any transport of munitions or goods to Japan and boycott all ships coming from or making for Japan" (Ibid).

Is this not "radical" action? Even the *manufacture* of munitions is to be stopped. But in reality these are only *words* about action, to prevent the *real struggle*.

The Second International here applies to the same imperialist governments, who have already shown that they are solidly allied with Japan and stand in the same front with her, only not with charges, but with the demand that they take "measures" against Japan. A real struggle against the robbers' onslaught on China, and the imperialist war which is being prepared against the Soviet Union, is only possible when one exposes the fact that Japan is not alone. Japan is only a link in the imperialist chain. Whoever really desires to fight against the menace of military onslaught on the Soviet Union must expose the rôle of the imperialist powers as allies of Japan, must fight against these powers, must conduct the struggle against his "own" Government, in his "own" country, and prevent the war supplies already to-day, step by step, through mass actions.

The Second International speaks of a struggle first, *after* the imperialist powers have recalled the Ambassadors, and if Japan goes further in spite of this, it threatens to fight only *after* the intervention of the imperialist powers which, however, as they know only too well, will never take place. They know full well that, in reality, precisely the contrary to the perspective they outline, is taking place; in addition to Ambassadors, the imperialist powers supply the necessary material basis for the war, and prepare the west front against the Soviet Union in support of Japan. This is the *real* action of the Second International. It is a manœuvre with the object of holding the working class back from struggle against the imperialist war, now when it is *the* question of the day, through the creation of illusions as though the imperialist governments are ready to oppose Japan. This is only for the purpose of winning time, to conclude the preparations of war against the Soviet Union satisfactorily.

For one part of the Second International this manœuvre was still not sufficiently radical. Otto Bauer demanded that the "Second International should direct an urgent appeal to the working class of the world at the present moment, shrink from no sacrifice, and utilise every means, irrespective of all the differences in principle between democratic Socialism and Bolshevism, to support the defence of the Soviet Union against Japanese imperialism, should these declare war against the Soviet Union, and to fight against any other power which seeks to use the Russian-Japanese conflict for attack upon the Soviet Union with every means." (Ibid, 21.5.1932).

If Otto Bauer also disagrees with his colleagues of the Second International on the method of the manœuvre, he is completely agreed with them in one (and precisely the decisive) point. He is agreed with them that one should first take up the struggle if . . . if . . . if . . . Until that time democratic peace and order is the first duty of citizenship. To attain this peace Otto Bauer "differentiates" from his friends, and hopes by this means to keep the workers (who are moving strongly to the left) under the influence of the Socialist Party. The Stuttgart resolution of 1907 contained the following paragraph:

> "Should the war nevertheless break out, it is our duty to fight for its rapid conclusion, and make every effort to utilise the economic and political crisis created by the war, to arouse the peoples, and thus accelerate the elimination of capitalist class rule."

This resolution which, thanks to this paragraph quoted, which was proposed by Lenin and Luxemburg, still breathes revolutionary spirit, proceeded from the connection between the proletarian revolution and the struggle against imperialist war. Later this was betrayed, like all the other pledges of the Second International, and only one Party really adopted it as an instruction; the Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin.

In the period of the general crisis of capitalism, while world capitalism prepares its onslaught upon the only country in the world where the proletariat rules, and Socialism is being constructed, the resolution of the Second International declares:

"Should the war break out, despite all attempts to prevent it, the first duty of the Parties concerned, is to make every effort to ensure a united International policy of the working class for peace." (Ibid, 21.5.1932).

Of course, here there is not one word about proletarian revolution. There remains only "united international policy." But *which policy*. This, the gentlemen have forgotten to say. We will help them somewhat.

Which war are we concerned with to-day? With the war against the Socialist Fatherland. Here one must see things in their true colours, *which policy* one will carry out "in the event of the outbreak of war," *against whom* one will fight for peace. The question is, *which* side to take?

The leaders of the Second International show where they stand by their participation in intervention throughout the whole of the past. This even comes to light also from their own resolutions. What is it but open support on the side of the interventionists, whose plans have so recently been exposed, when one writes, "the Second International states that the defence of the Soviet Union will be all the more guaranteed, the more the policy of the Government of the Soviet Union enables all the Socialist forces of the country to actively participate in the defence of the Russian Revolution." (Ibid).

What the "Socialist forces" want, may be observed from the "Socialist Vestnik" where the Mensheviks describe their objective as the "re-institution of property," namely, precisely that of the preparation for war against the Soviet Union by the imperialist powers.

According to this formula the slogan of the Second International to defend the Soviet Union is, consequently, "overthrow the dictatorship of the proletariat, place the Mensheviks in power, and bring capitalism back again." For this reason the Second International fights against the Soviet power with the Russian Mensheviks. The working class of the entire world can only defend the Soviet power when they have clear revolutionary parties, which daily lead this struggle, and organise the revolution in their "own" country. These parties are the Communist Parties. Consequently the Second International directs its main fire against the Communists precisely in the question of war. Of course, in the name of the "defence" of the Soviet Union.

"Where in the world can the Russian workers find friends and support, should Japanese imperialism really arm for an attack on Soviet Russia? In the Communist nonentities, or the great Social-Democratic Parties of the Western world? The responsible personages in Moscow will not grasp this. Nevertheless, perhaps the Communist workers do." (Arbeiter Zeitung. 20.5.1932).

Therefore join the Socialist Party if you want to defend the Soviet Union. How it comes about, that the "Communist nonentities" are thrown into prison, martyred, persecuted and shot by the rulers of capitalism, while the Social-Democratic Parties, the self-styled "best defenders" of the Soviet Union, are drawn into their Governments, is not stated. Is it not clear that the Social-Democratic Party is seeking to achieve exactly the same object as the ruling class, only in another way, namely, the destruction of the only Party which will be dangerous to the bourgeoisie in a war against the Soviet Union? The British I.L.P. is now creating committees for the "defence" of the Soviet Union. Even the Pilsudski Social-Democrats of Poland call for the defence of the Soviet Union. All the time this has only one object: to disarm the working class. To satisfy the workers that "our great Party is on the watch," to be able to carry out a hundred times more scandalous betrayal at the decisive moment than in 1914.

Recently "Vorwärts" let slip an admission which shows what the Social-Democratic leaders really think about the defence of the Soviet Union.

"Yes, things are really so serious now, that Moscow has every reason to make a basic change in its previous foreign policy. (It would seem that this foreign policy is to blame for the seriousness of the situation.—Ed.). Above all, the illusion must be forsaken that the capitalists are opponents of the Soviet Union, while the hearts of the workers beat for her. In reality things are already practically the reverse." "Vorwärts," 21.5.1932.

And so the workers are against, and the capitalists, however, are for the Soviet Union! Obviously the reason why the masses should enroll for the war against the Soviet Union. For through this war, also, those capitalist interests which trade with the Soviet Union will be encountered, while the workers (in conjunction with the Mensheviks) will be able to realise their "ideal" of democracy.

This is the real content of the "defence" of the Soviet Union by Social-Democratic leaders. Fight against everything which really defends the U.S.S.R., against any attempt at a true struggle. The Social-Democratic leaders have arrived at the manœuvre of the "defence" of the Soviet Union by a whole series of other "left" manœuvres with which it is connected. The first step on this path was Otto Bauer's "change" in the question of the

Soviet Union. This road is paved with "State capitalism," "general strike against Fascism and the offensive of capital," "the united front of all toilers." The masses desire Socialism and not war, the leaders of the Social-Democratic Parties show them the "nationalisation" of the debts of the bankrupt banks, and tell them this is the way to Socialism, we are already growing into it, without any struggle at all. The masses want to fight against their economic misery, the Social-Democratic leaders who take the revolutionary spirit of the masses into account are ready to place themselves at the head of any strike, to retain their influence over the mass and to throttle it, at the right moment when a struggle is unavoidable. The Polish Socialist Party, for example, placed itself at the head of the general strike, to prevent it coming under the leadership of the Communist Party, which would have led it to a complete victory. The masses want a united struggle against Fascism. The Social-Democratic leaders talk about a united front, meaning the unity under their leadership, unity for the prevention of the revolutionary struggle Social-Democracy is combining its manœuvres to conceal the preparations of war, with its manœuvres for the struggle against the revolutionary way out of the crisis. The object of "left" manœuvres like "State capitalism," the "socialisation" of the mines (in Germany), etc., is to hold the working class back from the struggle for the proletarian revolution, and the "left" manœuvre in the question of war, is to hold them back from real defence of the Soviet Union.

More then ever before, to-day, the fighting unity of all toilers is imperative. Every worker must realise that the preparation of the imperialist war goes ahead on every hand. There is only one force which can present serious resistance, which has the will and is capable of combining the struggle against imperialist war with the fight for the transformation of the Imperialist War into civil war, with the fight for the proletarian revolution. This force is the Communist Party, and the unity of all toilers must be established under its leadership, for the struggle for these aims, in spite of and against all "left" manœuvres of the Second International.

OPEN LETTER TO THE INDIAN COMMUNISTS

DEAR Comrades,

The revolutionary struggle of the toiling masses for their national and social liberation has reached a turning point. The national bourgeoisie, which has betrayed the revolutionary people, are trying their best to preserve their influence over the toiling masses, to ward off the approaching Indian revolution.

It depends to a great extent upon the efforts, the energetic and self-sacrificing struggle and correct policy of the Indian Communists, whether the treacherous bourgeoisie will maintain its influence and carry out its counter-revolutionary job successfully, or whether the working class, headed by the Communist Party of India, having isolated the national reformists, will lead the toiling masses of town and village to a victorious struggle for independence, land, and the workers' and peasants' power.

The objective conditions and the growth of the class consciousness of the Indian proletariat testify to the fact that the latter course has every chance of fulfilment, provided the Indian Communists overcome their lagging behind in the formation of a mass All-Indian Communist Party; provided they, on the basis of the platform of action published by them, and the experience of the past years, energetically and jointly undertake the formation of the Communist Party and organise the struggle of workers and peasants, not in words but in deeds.

1. The Correlation of Class Forces.

The Indian bourgeoisie which is trying to preserve its influence over the masses, and which did not break off its negotiations with British imperialism at the end of the Second Round Table Conference, is continuing its policy of counter-revolutionary compromise with British imperialism and betrayal of the revolutionary people. British imperialism, making use of counter-revolutionary national reformism, widely developed the policy of repression and provocation, the organising of the reactionary elements of the country, trying to drown in blood the rising masses of workers and peasants and simultaneously continuing negotiations with the Indian bourgeoisie. Full agreement between the Indian bourgeoisie and the British imperialists is being hindered at the present time by the rapidly developing revolutionary movement under the conditions of the deepening economic crisis.

Because of the sharpening of the economic crisis, the insignificant and temporary reduction of taxes in a few provinces has not helped the position of the peasants in the least. The burden of ruin, oppression and poverty, which is preconditioned by the whole system of imperialist

feudal-money-lending exploitation, and is aggravated by the present decline of agricultural prices, together with the actual increase in taxation and reaction, is reaching an unprecedented height. In spite of the fact that the process of drawing the peasant masses into the struggle is proceeding *unevenly*, it has already assumed such a powerful character (guerilla warfare in Burma and Kashmir, struggles in U.P., etc.), that on the one hand it has compelled the National Congress (which was negotiating an agreement with the imperialists) to continue pretending its sham opposition towards imperialism longer than it wished, to deceive the masses and disorganise the peasant struggle. On the other hand it has forced the British imperialists to hasten in the use of barbarous forms of mass terror to break up the people's movement.

On January 7th, 1932, the "Bombay Chronicle" was compelled to admit that

> "a noteworthy feature of the peasant movement in the United Provinces is the fact that the peasants are becoming their own leaders . . . that the peasant movement to an ever-increasing extent takes place at the initiative of the peasants themselves, and that they have identified themselves with the Congress because they could not get assistance from other organisations."

The leaders of the National Congress, Gandhi, Nehru, and Co., are compelled to admit the fact, in a number of speeches, that the anti-imperialist movement and the agrarian struggle are beginning to come together more and more. The terrified bourgeoisie are now trying to disorganise the peasants' struggle and hold the peasant movement back, so that it be limited to a peaceful, submissive economic campaign for slight reduction of taxes, postponement of debts, etc. However, in spite of the efforts of the National Congress, the peasant movement is beginning to exceed the limits marked out by the Congress, and dissatisfaction of the peasantry with the policy of the Congress is beginning to spread.

Dissatisfaction with the policy of the National Congress is likewise increasing among the petty-bourgeoisie in the towns (the increase in the wave of terrorist actions, increased interest of various elements in the terrorist movement, in the working-class movement and Marxism, speeches at student meetings in Calcutta, etc.) and is expressed to a still greater extent among the working masses.

The working class has roused the town petty-bourgeoisie and the peasantry, by its activities beginning from 1928, to the struggle against the British imperialists and thus had a tremendous influence on the development of the people's movement in 1930-31.

The events of the last few months (the Bombay demonstration against Gandhi, the Sholapur strike, etc.) show that the process of drawing the Indian proletariat into the economic and political struggle, accompanied by its liberation from the influence of the National Congress, is growing, and in spite of the still existing uneven character, is beginning more and more to assume an *all-Indian character*. All the facts show that in most cases, the workers themselves begin the strikes and that among the workers, not only in Bombay, but also in other places, there is growing a strata of active workers who are capable not only of becoming the cement and the leaders of a mass revolutionary trade union movement, but can become, with energetic work carried on the part of the Communists, the mass basis of a strong, working class, illegal Indian Communist Party.

Some comrades are inclined to think that the working-class movement entered a period of decline and depression as the result of the defeat of the Bombay strike in 1929. Such a point of view is entirely wrong. It is true that the defeat of the strike (which occurred as the result of the absence of a C.P. and neglect of the task of spreading the strike to Ahmedabad and Sholapur), the growth of unemployment in the first half of 1930, the terror of the employers and the police and particularly the insufficient work of the revolutionary wing of the trade union movement had undoubtedly a bad effect on the position of the G.K.U.* But this does not at all justify the theory of decline, because it was exactly in the years 1930-31 that (1) there was a final split of the Communist groups from "Left" national reformism and for the first time there really commenced the formation of an illegal Communist Party; (2) the working masses took a most active part in all political activities to the point to open fights against the police and the troops (Sholapur, etc.); (3) the backward sections of the proletariat of the country (Bangalore, Cawnpore, Baroda, etc.), who had been lagging behind, began to be drawn in the struggle; (4) a number of independent political activities of the working masses took place, and the working class, by its methods of struggle, put a specific imprint on the whole mass movement. The advanced sections of the proletariat commenced an open struggle against the National Congress. The historical demonstration of Bombay workers on the day of Gandhi's departure to London, and the Sholapur demonstration of textile strikers, are

* "Girni Kamgar" (Red Flag) Union.—Ed.

very remarkable instances of such a struggle, against the influence of the National Congress.

The development of a spontaneous working-class movement, the growth of the class-consciousness of the proletariat most definitely refutes the theory of reaction among the working masses, of a decline of their fighting spirit, of the low level of class-consciousness of the Indian proletariat outside Bombay. Such theories merely show that some comrades have not overcome their disbelief in the power of the working class, are not in contact with the workers outside Bombay, and confuse the question of the literacy of the workers, with the level of their class-consciousness. These comrades have brought with them, into the workers' movement, the anti-proletarian bureaucratic organisational principles of the National Congress, division into leaders and masses, and practical disbelief in the strength of the revolutionary rank and file, therefore they cannot even explain the outbreak of spontaneous economic strikes and the tremendous participation of the working masses in the anti-imperialist movement. This shows that many Communists have not yet pondered the experience of the end of 1927 and 1928, when the Bombay textile workers very quickly kicked out the reformist group of Joshi, to the astonishment of the revolutionary leaders, and solidly came over to the platform of the "Red Flag."

It may be stated accurately that in India "the strength of the present movement lies in the awakening of the masses (chiefly the industrial proletariat), and its weakness lies in the insufficient consciousness and initiative of the revolutionary leaders" (Lenin).

The general picture of the Communist movement is not satisfactory. On the one hand there is a tremendous unprecedented development of the working-class movement. On the other hand, the Communist Party still consists of a small number (though the number is increasing) of weak groups, often isolated from the masses, disconnected with each other, not politically united, and in some places not clearly differentiated from national reformism, adopting a conciliatory policy towards it. Instead of a struggle for a united all-Indian Communist Party, we find socialism, provincialism, self-isolation from the masses, etc., which, though it could be understood to some extent in 1930, now represents the *main* danger to the revolutionary, proletarian movement.

The lagging behind of the Communist vanguard must be rapidly and most decisively overcome. This is the first and *the most important* task for all those honest Communist revolutionaries who stand by the platform of action of the C.P. of I., and are faithful to the cause of the Indian and world proletariat.

2. Communists and the Struggle for Independence.

The biggest mistake made by Indian Communists consists in the fact that, in reality, they stood aside from the mass movement of the people against British imperialism. In spite of the fact that the documents of the Communist movement refer to this mistaken policy, no change has yet taken place, and self-isolation from the struggle for independence still exists.

In June, 1930, one of the documents of the Bombay organisation said:

> "We came to a position in Bombay when we actually withdrew from the struggle and left it entirely to the National Congress. We limited our rôle to that of a small group who sit aside and issue . . . leaflets occasionally. The result was one which could have been expected; in the minds of the workers there grew the opinion that we are doing nothing and that the Congress is the only organisation which is carrying on the fight against imperialism and therefore workers began to follow the lead of the Congress . . .
>
> "The result of the policy of actual withdrawal from the political struggle, lack of attempts to lead the masses, to organise them, to isolate the reformist elements proved to be harmful in regard to the growth of the C.P. itself."

The self-isolation of the Communists from the anti-imperialist mass struggle, alleged to be a purely Congress movement, has created confusion in the Communist ranks. It helped to increase the disbelief in the strength of the proletariat and the growth of its class-consciousness among Communist-intellectuals. It has hindered the development of the process of differentiation in the revolutionary movement, has hindered the isolotion of "Left" national-reformists from the working masses, and objectively strengthened the positions of the bourgeois National Congress.

The whole history of the Indian working-class movement, however, proves that this is a most dangerous error. At the dawn of the Indian working-class movement, Lenin, estimating the participation of the Bombay workers in the protest demonstration against the arrest of Tilok (in 1908) wrote:

> "In India also the proletariat has already reached the point of a conscious political struggle, and as this is the case, the days of the Anglo-Czarist order in India are numbered."

The movement of 1921-22, developing under the influence of the October revolution, showed a further maturing of the proletariat. Even the

enemies of the revolutionary proletariat, such as Gandhi, were compelled to admit (see "Young India") that the workers of Bombay, Ahmedabad and other towns came forward during this period as a most active force, thereby frightening the bourgeois National Congress terribly. But the present period, which is developing under the influence of the Chinese revolution, and the successful construction of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. (the Bombay strikes, the boycott of the Simon and Whitley Commissions, the Meerut trial, the movement of 1930-31, the formation of the C.P., etc.), shows the gigantic extent of the working-class movement, its further progress, and its particular activity in the struggle for independence. The whole history of the working-class movement decisively refutes those who do not believe in the strength of the proletariat, and its ability to fight for the leadership of the people's movement.

The bourgeois *National Congress,* deeply hostile to the proletariat, distracting the workers and peasants from the struggle against the capitalists and landlords, has so far succeeded in maintaining influence over considerably wide masses of the workers. This can be explained, mainly, by the fact that bourgeois national reformism has cleverly made use of the hatred of the working masses for British imperialism, and using this, has been foisting on them a policy of internal class peace concealed by "radical" phrases on the "joint national struggle."

Thus the liberation of the proletariat from the influence of the treacherous bourgeoisie, and its conversion from an active political force into the *leading* force with the hegemony of the people's movement can be brought about at present only by the exposure of the bourgeois National Congress and its "left" wing, Bose, Kandalkar, Roy, etc., as the betrayers of the struggle for independence. It can be realised only if the Communist Party takes a most energetic part in the struggle for independence, on the basis of an irreconcilable struggle against the national reformists.

This participation in the anti-imperialist movement is *closely* connected, and interwoven with the energetic participation of Communists in the everyday struggle for the economic interests of the working masses, with the most energetic support, organisation and development of the peasant struggle, the agrarian revolution and the attraction to their side of all revolutionary-democratic elements who are prepared to struggle against British imperialism.

The prerequisite for a correct policy for Communists in the anti-imperialist movement is a definite, sharp, clear and *uncompromising* struggle and exposure of the National Congress and especially the "Left" national-reformists, first of all its special variety — the group of Roy-Kandalkar.

However, while struggling against "left" national reformism, it is incorrect to separate ourselves from the mass movement of the people, who appear to be under the leadership of the National Congress. A distinction must be made between the bourgeois Congress leadership and those sections of the workers, peasants and revolutionary elements of the town petty-bourgeoisie, who, not understanding the treacherous character of the National Congress, followed it, correctly seeing the *basis* of their slavery in the domination of British imperialism.

The National Congress was able to preserve its leadership over the masses of town poor, workers, student youth, artisans, etc. (who participated in a number of armed struggles with the police force of British imperialism on their own initiative), not by its positive political programme which conceals its bourgeois-feudal contents under vague "radical" promises, but only on the basis of assurances of its loyalty to the independence movement, utilising the hatred of the people toward bloodthirsty robber imperialism and the still existing illusions of a "united national front."

To isolate the National Congress and all the "left" national reformists from the toiling masses, to help the separation of the forces of revolution and counter-revolution and establish the hegemony of the proletariat in the struggle of the people, the Indian Communists must take the most energetic part in the anti-imperialist movement and must be in the forefront in *all* activities, demonstrations and clashes of the toiling masses with the imperialists, coming forward as the organisers of the mass struggle, openly exposing everywhere and at all times, by concrete examples, the treachery of the bourgeois National Congress and its "left" wing. It is necessary to participate in all *mass* demonstrations organised by the Congress, coming forward with our own *Communist* slogans and agitation; to support all the revolutionary student demonstrations, be at the forefront in the clashes with the police, protesting against all political arrests, etc., constantly criticising the Congress leaders, especially "left" ones, and calling on the masses for higher forms of struggle, setting ever more concrete and ever more revolutionary tasks before them.

The experience of the Girni Kamgar Union confirms the correctness of this analysis. The Kandalkar-Roy group was able to split the G.K.U., because (paying lip service of their loyalty to the revolutionary struggle for independence) they appealed to the workers to support the united national front, and urged the workers

to join the bourgeois National Congress, describing it as a people's organisation, thus helping it to disorganise the revolutionary struggle of the toiling masses. It was only by use of "anti-imperialist" phraseology, utilising the hatred of the working masses towards the imperialists, that the national reformists were able to attract considerable sections of the workers to their side.

But if the existence of "united national front" illusions played its part in maintaining the influence of the National Congress, the self-isolation of the Communists objectively assisted the reformists, and retarded the process of the breaking away of the workers from the bourgeois National Congress. The treacherous Roy-V.N. Joshi-Kandalkar group tries to hide its counter-revolutionary essence and its affiliation to the National reformist camp, by the old and well-known bourgeois method of charging the Communists with ultra-radicalism and sectarianism.

This charge of sectarianism is nothing but slander of the Communists for their Bolshevist irreconcilability to national reformism, for their revolutionary hatred of the imperialist and feudal system of exploitation, for their persistent and continuous preparation and mobilisation of the toiling masses for the revolutionary overthrow of imperialist rule.

The treacherous Roy-Kandalkar group, in their appeal to the Trade Union Congress in Calcutta, in the leaflet issued in Bombay against Bradley and the Meerut prisoners, by their condemnation of the position of the revolutionary wing at the Nagpur Congress of trade unions, and the organisation of a reactionary bloc with the Joshi-Giri-Bokhale group, their disruptive work on the railroads, their struggle against the general strike, and the platform of action of the C.P.I., etc., only prove once more that they are agents of the bourgeoisie in the labour movement, that they are carrying on a policy of subordination of the working class to the bourgeoisie, that they are hindering the differentiation and break of the toiling masses with national reformism, and disorganising the revolutionary struggle of the workers and peasants for independence, land and bread.

Pledging their support to the Comintern in phrases, the Roy-Kandalkar-Joshi group are the worst enemies of the international revolutionary proletariat and the Indian anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution in deeds.

The conclusion to draw from this is: that the formation of an All-Indian Communist Party, the isolation of the national reformists, and the development of the people's revolution under the leadership of the proletariat, can only be achieved when the Communists determinedly liquidate their self-isolation from the anti-imperialist struggle of the masses. It can only be achieved when the Communists show that the C.P. is the leader of the toiling masses and the only leader of the anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution *in practice*, as the vanguard of the masses, showing the way of revolutionary struggle, sharply and mercilessly exposing and struggling against the National Congress and its "Left" wing.

From this point of view, the Communists must also sharply combat all ideas of those comrades who unconsciously arrive at self-isolation from the mass anti-imperialist struggle through their desire to preserve the cadres, to gain time for building the Party.

Such a line is harmful and shortsighted. The preservation of cadres, the guarantee of continuity and the formation of an illegal Party is an *extremely necessary task*. However, the fulfilment of it must not be achieved through self-isolation from the anti-imperialist struggle, but only by the correct combination of illegal and legal methods of work, organisation, and the most energetic drawing of workers into our ranks, and developing of new cadres from workers and trustworthy revolutionary youth.

3. The Struggle Against the National Congress and the Petty-Bourgeoisie.

The increase of the dissatisfaction of wide masses with the policy of the National Congress (negotiations in London, etc.), directly connected with the deepening of the crisis, the offensive of imperialism, and the further revolutionising of the toiling masses, has compelled the leaders of the National Congress to follow the path of new "Left" manoeuvres to strengthen their influence. Very characteristic in this connection is the fact that the "Left" national reformists (Bose, etc.) have again raised the question of their readiness to create a separate organisation of "Lefts" and have begun to "criticise" the participation of the National Congress in the Round Table Conference, etc. (see his speech at the Conference of the Youth in Maharaster). All this is done in order to once more fool the masses, and organise, if necessary, a "safety valve" like the former League of Independence to give an outlet for the dissatisfaction of the masses. These manoeuvres of the bourgeoisie show the process of ferment and disappointment which is spreading among the toiling masses, and confirms the *correctness* of the platform of action of the C.P.I. which speaks of the necessity of the sharpest differentiation, criticism and exposure of "Left" national reformism, including its foremost detachment, the group of Roy, as the necessary prerequisite for the mobilisation of the toiling masses

for a revolutionary struggle and the creation of a mass C.P.

Struggling against the bourgeois National Congress, some comrades mistakenly identify the bourgeoisie with the petty-bourgeoisie, mechanically contrasting the "class" interests of the proletariat with the independence movement as a whole; while other Communists, fighting against this mistaken conception, *forget* about the bourgeoisie, forget about the instability, the waverings and hesitations of the petty-bourgeoisie, and sometimes in practice join with or follow the latter, thus objectively subordinating the proletariat to the leadership of the national bourgeoisie.

For example, it was a mistake when the leaders of the trade union movement stated (see "Bombay Chronicle") that the split in Calcutta is a matter for the workers, only affects the trade union movement, is only connected with the economic struggle and has no connection whatsoever with the "patriotic" feelings of the nationalists. The struggle, against the bourgeoisie, inside the working class, is of decisive importance for the whole of the anti-imperialist movement. The split and issues raised in Calcutta are also an important stage in the anti-imperialist struggle, and the differentiation of the forces of revolution and counter-revolution. The organisation of an All-India centre of the trade union movement, based on the principles of the class struggle, must serve, in spite of the mistakes made, not only for the class consolidation of the proletariat, but must also help in the mobilisation of the peasantry and the revolutionary strata of the petty-bourgeoisie around the proletariat and its Communist vanguard. To do this it is also necessary to distinguish between the revolutionary patriotism of the toiling masses, suffering from national oppression and the treacherous counter-revolutionary pseudo-patriotism of the bourgeoisie. We must learn to prove that that portion of the trade union Congress which followed Bose, Kandalkar, Roy and Co. has carried on and is carrying on a struggle against the "patriotism," against the anti-imperialist fight of the revolutionary people. Those who separate the class interests of the proletariat from the struggle for independence *in practice* drive the toiling masses and the revolutionary sections of the petty-bourgeoisie into the arms of the National Congress and the "Left" wing, strengthen the position of the bourgeoisie, instead of rallying the toiling masses around the Communist Party and fighting for the hegemony of the proletariat.

A mistake of an opposite character is the statement of some comrades that the anti-imperialist movement of 1930-31 can be described as a movement of the town petty-bourgeoisie. From the viewpoint of these comrades, the proletariat and peasantry as the basic forces of the Indian revolution disappear, and the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie with its influence over the masses (still great) is forgotten. The tactics of the Communists are adapted as a result to the town petty-bourgeoisie and hence criticism of the National Congress and the "Left" national reformists is toned down. Among the supporters of this view there arose at the end of 1930, under the influence of the waverings of the town petty-bourgeoisie, a theory of "reaction" in the working-class movement (see "Railwayman," November, 1930). This theory incorrectly explained the situation of 1930 and would be wrong for the present period. Is it correct as "Railwayman" states, that the working class in 1930 came into motion under the influence of the dissatisfied petty-bourgeoisie and fell under its leadership? It is not.

In 1928-29 the proletariat by its strikes, its struggle against the Simon and Whitley Commissions, its revolutionary position at the Nagpur T.U. Congress, etc., aroused the petty-bourgeoisie to the anti-imperialist struggle. In 1930 the most active element in all mass actions in the towns (Bombay, Sholapur, Calcutta, Madras, etc.) was the working class. In many cases the advanced sections of the workers spontaneously took the initiative into their hands, drawing the students and the city poor to their side (Calcutta, etc.). Therefore, to underestimate the growth of the revolutionary consciousness and activity of the working class, to claim that it was an appendage of the petty-bourgeoisie, means in reality to fail to see its process of development, to lag at the tail end of events, give up the idea of forming a mass Communist Party and blame the workers for their (some of the revolutionary leaders) own pessimism, shortsightedness and inability to organise the struggle of the working class. Depicting the petty-bourgeoisie as the leading force in 1930 and construing a theory of "reaction," the authors of the article made a mistake, in the sense that they gloss over the question of the treachery of the national bourgeoisie, which succeeded, in 1930, in leading the petty-bourgeoisie, and a considerable portion of those sections of workers and peasants, who, for the first time, were drawn into the independence movement. By stating that the working class was following the petty-bourgeoisie, the authors of the article unconsciously help to conceal the bourgeois character of the National Congress, identify the petty-bourgeoisie with the bourgeoisie and in reality hinder the exposure of the national reformists—objectively helping to spread the harmful theory of the necessity of toning down

criticism of the National Congress, so as not to frighten away the masses who follow it.

Actually what the author of the article entitled "reaction" meant was that among the workers there was a growing discontent with the treacherous policy of the National Congress, that the illusions of the "united national front" had begun to disappear, and a drift of the masses from the National Congress had commenced. The absence of the C.P. hinders this process and makes it possible for the enemies of the working class to bring demoralisation into the ranks of the proletariat. It is from this point of view, without throwing responsibility for the mistakes of the revolutionary leaders on to the workers, that we should attentively consider the counter-revolutionary speech of Ruikar, and the resolution adopted by the Nagpur textile trade union in January, 1932. Speaking of the growing disbelief of the workers in the leaders of the National Congress, Ruikar called on the workers not to support any political party whatever, but to *only* carry on an economic struggle, and persuaded the Nagpur textile union to pass a resolution not to take any further part in the national movement and restricting themselves merely to the trade union struggle. ("B.C.," January 14th.)

These facts testify to the drifting of the masses from the National Congress and the treacherous work of the national reformists Kandalkar-Ruikar-Roy, once more confirm the harmfulness and the danger of the theory of "reaction," which is linked up with self-isolation from the anti-imperialist struggle and lack of faith in the working class. Self-isolation from the anti-imperialist struggle aids the work of all the agents of imperialism, who are trying to detract workers from the political struggle, and disorganise their ranks, especially at this moment when millions of peasants are being drawn in, when dissatisfaction and disappointment with the National Congress is growing, when the class character and treachery of the National Congress, in the struggle for independence, and the interests of the peasantry, becomes clearer.

In close connection with the mistakes exposed above we find the underestimation of the danger of "Left" national reformism and an insufficient struggle against it. In all the statements of the Communists (leaflet for the Karachi National Congress, etc.), the question of the "Lefts" and their special function and rôle *was not raised.* A struggle is carried on against persons but the "programme," manoeuvres and nature of "Left" national reformism is not exposed. Such a mistake was made also at the Trade Union Congress in Calcutta. But it is not accidental that the "Left" national reformists are hastening to cover themselves with "socialist" armour and the renegade Roy swears devotion to the Comintern. The "Lefts" will come more and more to the forefront, especially the Roy group, whose particular task is to carry on disintegrating work among the proletarian *vanguard.* The position of the comrades who tried to secure unity with Kandalkar was entirely wrong, because instead of raising questions of principle (the struggle against national reformism), they raised the question of persons, forgetting that the positions of groups and persons always reflect the interests of definite classes, and thus these comrades have been objectively helping the National Congress. The point of view of those comrades who think that criticism of the "Left" national reformists in the trade unions will lead to the isolation of the C.P. is wrong. On the contrary, if criticism is taken to the *masses,* the Communists will only strengthen their influence and win over the masses to their programme. We must hold the "Left" national reformists to their words, and expose their phrases appealing to the people, before the masses by *comparing them with their deeds,* showing that the first and smallest test was the fact that, instead of fighting against the imperialists, they went to the Round Table Conference; instead of helping the peasants they helped the imperialists to collect taxes; and now they are disorganising the no-rent movement; instead of supporting the workers they sabotage the general strike; instead of a revolutionary struggle they preach conter-revolutionary non-violence and submission; instead of supporting the revolutionary workers they split the Trade Union Congress in Calcutta and made an agreement with the Joshi and Giri group, the open agents of the imperialists, etc. Therefore, we must consider as incorrect the fact that the proletarian revolutionaries, while struggling against the national reformists at the Calcutta T.U. Congress, did not come out simultaneously with a special declaration against the Sen-Gupta group, thereby hindering the differentiation and the struggle against national reformism. The struggle against national reformism, and still more against its dangerous variety (the Roy-Kandalkar-V.N. Joshi group) serves as a base, and is connected with the overcoming of two incorrect points of view which have appeared in the process of the formation of the Communist movement. One of these consists in passive resistance to the extensive recruiting of revolutionary workers into the ranks of the Party. The other consists in glossing over the *class character of the Communist Party.* It is wrong to propose to the revolutionary petty-bourgeois organisations to

fuse with the Communist Party. An alliance of the proletariat with the peasantry is the *basis* of the strategy of the Indian C.P., but while fighting for the leadership of the anti-imperialist and the general peasant struggle, we must not for a moment forget the separate organisation of the town and village proletariat, and the formation of a completely *independent* class Party—the Communist Party. While fighting in alliance with the peasantry, the Indian proletariat must preserve its class independence; this is the only guarantee, not only that it will be able to ensure its hegemony (if a Communist Party exists) in the general national movement, but that it will be able to *draw* the majority of the oppressed peasantry, after the overthrow of the power of the imperialists, *with it* in the struggle for socialism.

4. The Peasants and the Non-Payment of Taxes Movement.

The tremendous growth of the peasant movement, taking on the character of guerilla warfare in some districts, the struggle in the United Provinces, etc., was the main reason compelling the National Congress to move more and more to the right, against the revolutionary people, concealing its actions by "Left" manoeuvres. The National Congress has retarded the "no-rent and no-taxes" movement in every way for one and a half years, and helped the British imperialists to collect taxes and debts from the peasants. Now, stating that it sympathises with the non-payment movement in words, it continues to carry on disorganisational counter-revolutionary work against it in reality.

The present "no-rent and no-tax" movement bears a spontaneous character. The task of the Communists at the present time is: following the policy as outlined in the platform of action of the C.P.I., to actually start the organisation of a mass movement for the non-payment of taxes, rent and debts, drawing all revolutionary democratic elements into this campaign, and giving it the anti-imperialist character of the struggle for independence. Only in this way, proving by concrete examples how the "radical" words of the National Congress differ from their disorganising actions, will it be possible to *isolate* the national reformists and develop a powerful peasant movement. Besides direct agitational and organisational work by the Party and the utilisation of the industrial workers connected with the villages, it is necessary to call on the revolutionary elements of the *rank and file* (followers of the National Congress; the youth leagues; the peasant organisations, etc.), to undertake the organisation of a nation-wide movement for the non-payment of taxes and rent, in spite of the National Congress and over its head, organising *peasant committees*, self-defence groups, and establishing contact with the town workers.

It is incorrect to oppose the slogan of the general strike to the mass movement for non-payment of taxes and debts, civil disobedience, and the boycott. While supporting this mass movement, the Communists must win the leadership of it, and exposing the treachery of the National Congress by concrete example, develop and guide it into genuinely revolutionary channels.

5. The Slogan of the General Strike and the Struggle for the Majority of the Proletariat.

At the end of 1930 some revolutionists (see article of "Railwayman") took a negative attitude to the slogan of the general strike. These comrades "explained" their negative attitude by claiming that the workers were not yet sufficiently class-conscious and that most of the trade unions opposed this slogan.

The basis for this position was an incorrect estimation of the general situation, lack of faith in the strength of the working class, and confusion on the question of the tactical tasks of Communists.

The objective situation of 1930, and at present, shows that the slogan of a general strike was and is timely, corresponds to the relationship of class forces, and is one of the basic uniting slogans for the next stage of the struggle of the working class for hegemony in the people's movement.

The author of the article confused the question of the slogan of the general strike as a tactical line for the Communists, with the question of the *date* for calling the strike, which depends on a number of concrete factors. We must not, under the excuse of disagreement with the fixing of a date for the strike, carry on a struggle against the tactical line of the revolutionary proletariat. "To consider the mood of the workers is important when choosing the moment of action, but not for deciding the tactical line of action, of the working class" (Lenin).

It is also incorrect to consider the slogan of a general strike according to the attitude of the trade union leaders. The majority of the Indian trade unions are bureaucratic, non-mass organisations, acting against the interests of the working masses, *without contact with them.* At the present time, the strength of these reformist trade unions is the result of the poor activity of the proletarian revolutionaries, of disorganisation in the workers' ranks, and the fact that the national reformists utilise the anti-imperialist sentiment of the working class. It is useful to recollect the experience of Bombay in 1928 and the rapid breaking up of the textile "Union" of Joshi and Co.

When considering the slogan of the general strike we must not mistake the attitude of the reformist leaders for the real sentiments of the working class. This is a gross error.

In order to break down the disorganising influence and work of the reformists, it was necessary not to withdraw the slogan of the general strike, but on the contrary transfer the struggle for it to the *rank and file,* to the masses, exposing the reformists and *organising* the workers.

The events of the last few months (the increase of strikes, the growing demand of the railwaymen for a railway strike, the growth of unemployment and poverty, resistance to the terror of the imperialists, etc.) show that support for the slogan of the general strike is *increasing.* The task of Communists is to come forward in deeds not in words as *initiators* of the struggle of the workers. To start to organise strike committees, composed of rank and file workers and using the assistance of *all* revolutionary democratic organisations (youth leagues, rank and file revolutionaries at present deceived by the National Congress) and thus mobilising *all* forces, over the head of the reformist trade union leaders, developing the strike movement, especially on the railways, and by means of them, linking them up with political demands, leading the masses to the general political strike. We greet the fact that Indian workers, as stated in the "Railway Mazdoor," are beginning this task. The general strike is of historic importance for the development of the revolutionary movement and the conversion of the proletariat into the leading force, mobilising the peasants and the city poor around it. It will deliver the first powerful blow at the power of the imperialists — bringing the revolutionary people right up to the highest form of struggle, the revolutionary uprising.

The development of the strike movement places the task of forming mass trade unions, and factory committees, before the Communists and the necessity of combining the battles for the everyday interests with the political struggle. The revolutionary T.U. movement has registered a number of individual successes, like the strikes at Sholapur and Bombay, the calling of a conference of textile workers with the participation of 400 delegates from 60 factories, the strengthening of its position among the railwaymen, the growth of the workers' press, etc.

However, the weakness of the G.K.U., the loss of the leadership of the strike at the "Madhowji Dbaramsi" factory, the loss of the leadership in the tramway union, etc., also show that the Communists disdain the everyday work in the factories and trade unions, do not build up groups of active workers, do not form Communist fractions, do not carry on sufficient everyday organisational and agitational work. It is *only* by leading and defending the interests of the workers in large and small struggles *constantly and every day,* in attack and defence, that the Communist Party can win the unshakable *confidence* of the working class and lead it to the decisive battle against the exploiting classes.

It is time to get rid of bad traditions in the trade unions (the traditions of bureaucratic methods of work from above, the division into leaders and rank and file) and to start to form mass trade unions with *elected* management committees, consisting of workers from the bench, regularly functioning and *in contact* with the working masses, boldly promoting workers, supporting them and in every way developing their initiative and self-reliance.

We must carry on energetic work among the workers who follow the reformist trade unions. It is a great mistake to continue the practice of self-isolation from workers' meetings, and the mass trade unions which are under the influence of the reformists. Communists must *always* take part in them and carry on work among the workers, urging them to join the united fighting front of the proletariat.

During strikes and other economic and political actions of the workers, it is necessary to propose to the workers who follow the reformists to help the general struggle, take part in the rank and file unity committees, defend the workers' demands, etc., and thus fight for the unity of the workers, not in words, *but in deeds,* exposing the reformists at the same time.

At the same time, it is necessary to change the passive attitude of Communists to the question of the *All-Indian* trade union movement and repudiate the special theory that "the trade union Congress is not living and concrete for the workers." In this, as in the other questions, lack of faith is shown in the working class and local tasks are *counterposed* to all-Indian tasks, the G.K.U. is counterposed to the trade union Congress.

Such counterposing is very harmful. While developing our activity a hundred times for strengthening the G.K.U. and converting it into an all-Indian textile union (including Sholapur, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, etc.), it is necessary to completely do away with a negative attitude towards the all-Indian trade union movement, and begin to form mass trade unions all over the country, in the coal, steel and jute industry, the plantations and the railroads, *attracting* the workers of the reformist trade unions to our side.

After the split of the Calcutta trade union congress, the revolutionary wing did *nothing* to form

a mass trade union movement, while the national reformists are carrying on a "unity" campaign (i.e., disorganisation of the revolutionary proletariat), organised a number of all-Indian campaigns ("Labour Day," etc.), formed a textile federation, seized the initiative on the railroads, formed provincial trade union councils, etc.

Even now the revolutionary trade union movement is in a position to send a number of groups of active workers to various centres in the country so as to start work among the rank and file workers. Only by boldly *promoting* workers and tested revolutionary Communist intellectuals into the leadership, starting real work and abandoning a number of mistakes explained above—only in this way will the Communists be able to start the organisation of the proletariat and develop the struggle for the hegemony of the working class in the people's movement.

6. The Struggle for an All-Indian Party.

The biggest gain of the proletarian movement, the greatest move forward is the fact that the advanced workers and revolutionaries have entirely separated from the National Congress and commenced to form an illegal Communist Party. The idea of an illegal C.P. has *already* been adopted and is beginning to be carried out.

However, the development of the Indian Communist movement is being blocked by the state of discord, the separate existence of the Party groups, a number of mistakes connected with it and enumerated above, without overcoming which, the movement cannot normally develop further.

If the period of isolated circles might have been considered inevitable in 1930 and the beginning of 1931, such a position must be considered as *extremely* harmful and dangerous to the further development of the Communist movement at the present time.

The movement has now reached a stage of development when it is *absolutely necessary* to raise the standard of struggle for an All-Indian Communist Party resolutely and firmly, for uniting and welding together all the Communist groups, for the organisational and ideological *unity* of the Communist ranks, utilising and developing the initiative from below to form and develop new local groups and organisations at the same time.

Hence it must be recognised that the Party organisation has not carried out a correct policy; instead of a struggle for the Party, it has, in reality, taken the line of provincialism. Instead of helping the local groups, it has taken up the position of self-limitation, and reducing the whole Party merely to a local organisation, not linked up with other local organisations. Instead of rousing and organising the *ideological* struggle for the Party, widely explaining and discussing all the questions of principle of the movement (for which purpose it is necessary to create an illegal printed organ of the Central Committee and legal newspapers in the *shortest possible time*), the Party organisation was not even able to continue publication of the legal Marxist paper of all-Indian importance. The absence of such illegal and legal papers (and their substitution by the trade union press does not improve the position) not only drove all disagreements deep inside, hindering the working out of a united Party line, but it played a great negative rôle in the formation of the Communist Party, strengthening of contact between the various districts, development of the class struggle against the imperialists and the bourgeoisie, and winning the workers and the revolutionary youth to the Communist Party. Revolutionary newspapers are appearing everywhere in the country (in Calcutta, Madras, Punjab, etc.), trying to preach Marxism and defend the proletarian point of view. However, the absence of an illegal (and a legal) Party press makes it exceedingly *difficult* to influence them, to struggle against confusion, discord and gross mistakes, *hinders* the working out of a united Communist line and the establishment of unity of views and methods of struggle. It is necessary to clearly understand the teachings of Lenin on the rôle of a central Party paper as an agitator and *organiser* of the masses and the Party. This is particularly important for the *present* period of the Indian Communist movement.

A psychology of provincialism has developed in the circles and refusal to work on an *All-Indian* scale. On all questions which were of All-Indian importance (the All-Indian Trade Union Movement, the general strike on the railroads, the peasant struggle, the movement for the non-payment of rent and taxes, the Round Table Conference, the jute strike, etc.), the Communist groups proved unable to rise above the provincial horizon. They did not see the general task and the All-Indian scale of the struggle, which in its turn, led them to narrow down their tasks, on the spot, in their provinces. In practice, they completely cleared the All-Indian arena for the national reformists, who took the initiative in the organisation (i.e., in reality disorganisation) of the railroad movement, the textile federation, the united front campaign, the work among the miners and metal workers of Jamshedpur, etc. Abandonment of the All-Indian arena, *self-isolation*, for instance, inability of revolutionary leaders of the Bombay

workers to give assistance to the jute strike in Calcutta, etc., in practice leads to the strengthening of the influence of the bourgeoisie, hinders the formation of the C.P., prevents the winning of the hegemony in the struggle of the people by the working class, leads to the *loss of initiative* in all questions whatsoever (in the struggle for the trade union congress, preparations for the railway strike, etc.).

Provincialism and discord is also shown in the fact that the G.K.U. alone is made to take the place of the All-Indian trade union movement. In practice this leads to the fact that the Communist groups *voluntarily* leave the All-Indian arena and objectively play into the hands of the bourgeoisie and the imperialists.

The existence of the Party as a number of isolated groups brings about complaints that there are no forces, no comrades available, that it is impossible to cope with the great tasks facing the revolutionary movement. Hence we often find passivity, despondency, mutual disputes, deviations of all kinds, sectarianism and an opportunist attitude to national reformism, in which the possibility of splits, on an unprincipled basis, becomes very great. However, this complaint of the absence of forces is contradicted by thousands of facts of every-day life which show that among the workers and the revolutionary youth there are thousands of active fighters sympathetic to the C.P.

It is necessary to come forward decisively for an All-Indian C.P. While increasing a hundredfold local work (especially in Calcutta, etc.), it is necessary at the same time to move the centre of gravity of Party work somewhat to the All-Indian activity, and begin to build the Party, carrying on the struggle for a common political line, creating a network of local Party organisations, developing the sense of responsibility, Party feeling and discipline, encouraging local initiative and courageously drawing workers and those revolutionary intellectuals who are true to the working class cause into our ranks. Such a change will not weaken, but on the contrary will make the local activity, contacts and agitation, stronger and more stable. It is necessary to build and extend Party organisations everywhere, encouraging local initiative. The strength of the Communist Party is determined by the degree of its contact with the wide masses, above all with the proletariat. The only correct form of organisation to secure this contact, and the fighting ability of the Party is the system of *factory* cells. Particularly in India, under conditions of terror and comparatively high concentration of the proletariat, the formation of factory cells is *absolutely* essential obligatory and highly important task of the Party. It is necessary to get in touch with, and draw in all active industrial workers, because that is the chief guarantee of successful building of an illegal Communist Party, able to withstand the terror and lead the struggle of the working class. It is essential to arrange propagandist circles, short courses, etc., at the same time, to develop and teach the active workers the elemental essentials of Marxism, helping them in every way into active Party work as organisers and leaders of working class struggles and Party organisations. The Communist groups were also unable to properly combine legal and illegal forms of work. In some districts, following the correct position of the platform of action of the C.P.I. that under present conditions the C.P.I. can exist *only* as an illegal Party, the Communists have not been able to ensure the formation and normal existence of illegal organisations and leading organs.

It must be thoroughly realised (and this will determine how seriously and consistently the Communists stand by the illegal Party and the revolutionary struggle) that the leading organs of the Party, and the kernel of the Party organisations, must be in an *illegal position*, and that mixing the conspirative and open apparatus of the Party organisation is *fatal* to the Party, and plays into the hands of Government provocation. While developing the illegal organisation in every way, measures must be taken for preserving and strengthening the conspirative kernel of the Party organisation. For the purpose of all kinds of open activity (in the press, meetings, leagues, trade unions, etc.), special groups and commissions, etc., should be formed which, working under the leadership of Party committees, should under no circumstance injure the existence of illegal cells.

To sum up: the slogan of an All-Indian illegal, centralised Communist Party, ideologically and organisationally united, a true section of the Comintern, fighting for the platform of action of the C.P.I. and the programme of the Communist International must become the *central slogan* for gathering and forming the Party; and for the struggle against waverings, against the tendency of maintaining isolated circles, against toning down the struggle against national reformism and opportunist sectarianism, all of which hinder the victory of the working class.

Conclusion.

The international situation is becoming more and more acute. Japanese imperialism is carrying on war in China and, together with a number of imperialist States, is preparing its division

and complete subjugation. It meets the resistance of U.S.A., which is striving to strengthen and widen its imperialist position in China by way of reducing the share of the other imperialist robbers and increased exploitation of the Chinese masses. The military offensive, the war of the imperialist States against the U.S.S.R., the first working class republic, which has the sympathy of the revolutionary proletariat and the oppressed colonial masses of the world—is *fast approaching*. British imperialism is once more trying to utilise India, as in the world war, to supply reinforcements for its army, use its raw materials, and make it into a strategic basis for the war against the U.S.S.R. and the revolutionary peoples of the East. The Indian bourgeoisie is *once more* betraying and selling the revolutionary people for a mess of pottage.

In the approaching deadly struggle between world imperialism and the proletarian State—the rôle of the Indian Communists is enormous. The Indian anti-imperialist and agrarian revolution can deliver a death-blow at British imperialism and thus hasten the complete destruction of capitalism throughout the world and guarantee the victory of the world revolution. The C.P. of India occupies a responsible sector of the world revolution. And for this struggle the Indian Communists must prepare in a truly Bolshevik manner.

At the present time, the tasks are exceptionally difficult. But for the Indian Communists there is no other revolutionary way to solve these tasks than the Bolshevist way, that is: With the maximum of energy, tenacity and consistency, following the Marxian-Leninist theory and practice, to undertake, in spite of difficulties, individual failure and defeats, the fulfilment of these tasks and the most important of them—the creation of a true Communist Party.

There can be no greater crime than if the Indian Communists (having their platform of action of the C.P.I. and agreeing with the present letter) *instead* of struggle for the great historical aims of the Indian and world proletariat, follow the path of unprincipled factional struggle, fractions and personal groupings. Unprincipled factional struggle will play *into the hands* of the British imperialists. True Communist groups must put the interests of the proletariat above everything else, direct all their efforts towards the rapid formation of the Communist Party, settling all questions of dispute within the framework of the Communist International and if necessary with its assistance.

The Communists of the whole world do not doubt that, in spite of their present weakness, inexperience and partial isolation, the Indian Communists will show sufficient Bolshevist firmness, courage and decisiveness to enter the wide All-Indian area of struggle for the Party—the leader and organiser of the Indian revolution.

Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

Central Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain.

Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany.

THE MINERS' STRIKE IN CZECHO-SLOVAKIA AND ITS LESSONS

THE Central Committee of the Czecho-Slovakian Communist Party met on the 19th and 20th of March, 1932. In the resolution unanimously adopted it was said that:

> "In the recent period the Party and the Red Unions were better able than hitherto to lead the opposition in the factories against the offensive of the employers. To-day, however, the attacks of the capitalists enter on a new stage; they are making a simultaneous frontal attack upon huge sections of the workers, whole branches of industry. This, and the successful development of the small strikes, calls for the transition to big mass struggles and strikes. The success of this task depends upon the further development of our influence in the factories."

The Central Committee was led to this conclusion by the following train of thought which was given expression in the reports and discussion in the committee.

The Party was successful in securing a somewhat significant success among the unemployed, by establishing a broad united front movement of the unemployed under its undisputed leadership. It developed—particularly in the Carpathian Ukraine—a broad and keen mass movement of the small peasants against Czechish imperialism. In many branches of industry (building workers, land labourers), it led a great number of small, and in the majority of instances, successful local strikes. But the decisive shortcoming of the mass resistance against the capitalist offensive, organised by the Party, was the absence of any big strike movements in the principal important industries. There the resistance in the first stage was in the form of guerilla warfare, of small fights. Action in individual factories, demonstrations outside the factories, short demonstrative strikes—this was the form of the development of the struggle, in the course of which the Communists and the Red Trade Unions fought slowly and stubbornly to develop the faith of the working masses in bigger struggle by means of the defence also of the smallest day-to-day interests of the workers. For the rest, this form of struggle also accorded with the form of the capitalist offensive; for in the majority of instances the employers did not give notice to end the collective agreements. They abandoned the higher cost of living increase, individually reduced the agreed wage-rates, enormously increased the measures of rationalisation, gave notice to individual workers, and gradually carried through the dismissals.

In the recent period, with the rapid development of the crisis, the employers' offensive also proceeded at a faster rate. The capitalists went over to a great frontal attack; they terminated the agreements for whole sections of the workers; there was a setting aside of wage-rates and mass dismissals in whole sections. The old form of resistance no longer answered to the requirements of the situation. If the Communist Party is to win the confidence of the masses in the revolutionary way out of the crisis, it must defend the interests of the masses by a great struggle against the capitalist attempts to seek a solution of the crisis by means of a fearful impoverishment of the working masses. The position imperiously demanded the transition from guerilla warfare in the factories to the organisation of mass strikes.

On the other hand the guerilla warfare presupposed the solution of this task. For only through a number of small struggles can the Communists harness the masses, raise their self-consciousness and persuade them that the Communists not only are able correctly to estimate the situation and to show the perspectives, but also that they are able energetically and successfully to lead the daily struggle of the workers.

For these reasons the Central Committee put forward the transition to mass strikes, and particularly the organisation of the miners' strike, as the vital question. This happened on March 20th. On March 23rd the great miners' strike began.

* * *

The prerequisite of a successful development of the great miners' strike against the will of the Social-Fascist leaders and in spite of the raging terror of the State apparatus was a number of small strikes, which had been already organised in all important districts under the leadership of the Party and the Red Unions since last autumn. Already in November of last year, in the Northern Bohemian mining district a broad movement was organised for the payment of the cost-of-living increase—abandoned by the employers. This demand at that time brought the masses for the most part into action. The correct tactic of proletarian united front was employed. A broad united front conference was organised and a United Area Committee elected, in which a number of Reformist factory committees and functionaries of the Reformist trade union groups

were represented. In December there was organised in the pits a number of short demonstrative strikes to demand payment of the cost-of-living increase, in which more than half the workers involved participated. At the State pits the action was successful in getting the cost-of-living increase granted. And it was precisely this wave of small fights and also the partial successes which the workers in many pits achieved, which strengthened the fighting determination of the North Bohemian miners and created the basis for a broad united front of mineworkers.

In December in the Kladno district the Communist Party and the Red Unions organised a fight for the concrete partial demands of the mineworkers, for the cost-of-living increase, against the reduction of miners' insurance, against dismissals, and for the six-hour day without wage adjustment. At the end of December this fight reached its summit in a united action of the Kladno mineworkers, linked up with short demonstrative strikes at the pits, demonstrations of the miners, their women folk and the unemployed before the pits and on the streets of Kladno. This action secured—as compared with Brüx—no material success, but it mobilised the masses and thereby prepared the solidarity action of the Kladno district for the Brüx strike.

In the Ostrau district as well the Party led a long preparatory campaign. Here in the foreground, besides the cost-of-living increase and the fight against dismissals, stood the special demands of the young mineworkers. A number of united front conferences mobilised the masses already in the summer and autumn of last year. The movement rose to demonstrative strikes at individual pits where workers had been dismissed.

While this action in all districts led to wide propaganda for the slogan of "Not a man to be dismissed: Not a farthing wage reduction," and for the six-hour day without wage reductions, and popularised the strike weapon, so also a situation was created in the districts in which the masses were ready to answer a new attack of the coal barons with a strike—a situation in which a spark would start an explosion.

* * *

At the beginning of March the broad offensive of the coal barons began. They demanded the dismissal of 15,000 mineworkers, wage reductions up to 30 per cent. and the worsening of a number of conditions in the agreement. (As regards Saturday allowances, etc.) It was clear that this was the beginning of a frontal attack of the coal magnates in all districts and the signal for a broad offensive against all wages. The Party put forward a slogan of defence against these attacks by strong action, and began to mobilise the radicalised workers. The Social-Fascist leaders began to manœuvre. They called a Unity conference of all the representatives of factory councils and local leaders of the district, and also invited the Red Trade Unions, who hitherto had always been strictly boycotted. They vowed solemnly to reject the conditions of the coal barons and that they would never willingly agree to wage reductions and dismissals. They spoke solemnly and at great length about the necessity of working-class unity and invited the Red Unions this time to the negotiations with the employers, although they were no parties to the contract, and although previously they had sought to keep their representatives far removed from all negotiations. But at the same time they endeavoured to lull the workers and to hinder all concrete measures of struggle as well as the establishment of a united front organisation. The mistakes of the Ostrau comrades, with which we shall be concerned later, made it possible for them to win time and to prolong negotiations.

In the meantime, the offensive of the coal barons commenced also in the district of Northern Bohemia; indeed, here the employers did not come forward with an open declaration of their demands, but they planned a 10 per cent. to 12 per cent. wage cut and began with dismissals. Shortly after a pit disaster, which had been brought about by rationalisation, and in which eight lives had been sacrificed and the mineworkers brought into a state of great agitation, the Brüx Mining Co. gave notice to the whole of the workers at the Humboldt pit, about 340 men. On the proposal of the Communists the workers replied with an immediate strike. The strikers pulled out the neighbouring pits and brought them to a standstill. Two days afterwards all the pits of this company were on strike. The Party put forward the slogan of an all-district strike. On the 27th March a Unity conference took place, called by the Pit Council, at the Humboldt pit, which put forward the demand for a general mineworkers' strike of the whole district. The Social-Democratic, National-Socialist and Fascist leaders declared the strike to be "wild" and called upon all their members to break the strike, forbade them to participate in the elected strike committees which everywhere had been rapidly established. Reinforcements of the police, gendarmerie and military quickly came into the district. The Ministry promised again to go into the question of compensation for the shutting down of the Humboldt pit. The district authorities issued a publication saying that thereby the grounds for striking had been removed and there-

fore they would suppress the strike "by every means." The miners, with their womenfolk and the unemployed, went from pit to pit, and in spite of the prohibition, held daily meetings (at which Communist representatives spoke) fought the gendarmes who had established themselves at the pits; and always the effect was the same; further enterprises refused to work under the "protection" of the gendarmes, came out, elected pit committees, established mass picketing and joined in the strike.

On the 23rd March, thirty-five pits were at a standstill; on the 29th March fifty-two, on the 30th eighty-eight, and on the 31st the strike was as complete as ever seen in this district; out of over 100 pits not one person was at work and from the whole area not a single piece of coal was transported without the permission of the central leadership.

The pits at Kladno came out on strike, and in a few days here also the strike spread to all pits in the district with the exception of two.

All this, in spite of the demands of the Social-Fascist leaders for the breaking of the strike; all this, in spite of the fact that at the strike of one of the pits longest at work, Julius V. in Komotau, the gendarmerie had already turned the guns on the crowd. The mineworkers answered with new mighty demonstrations. They did not, it is true, force their way through the military and police cordons up to Julius V. Pit. But the men answered the bloodbath by joining in the strike.

On February 27 the broad united front conference met in Brüx. It put forward the demands: Withdrawal of all notices, guarantees against all dismissals and wage reductions for the period of a year, compensation for short time, holidays at employers' cost, six-hour day without wage adjustment, safety and sanitation for mineworkers, insurance at the employers' and State expense, State maintenance for all unemployed and abolition of Geneva system, prohibition of the filling of pit wagons during the days when not hauled, pit inspectors (safety measures) elected by all workers and paid by the State, immediate recall from the district of gendarmes and the military. A broad strike leadership was elected from all the organisations concerned (the organised Communists were in a minority, but had undisputed leadership). It was decided to extend the strike over the whole district, everywhere to elect strike committees, representative of and led by mineworkers only, and to set up mass picketing. The conference turned towards the Ostrau mineworkers with the invitation to join in a common fight against a common foe.

In the meantime the Party took up the line of the extension of the strike into a general strike of mineworkers. It was decided to do everything to secure the participation of the other districts in the strike as quickly as possible.

On March 29, in spite of the most raging terror, in spite of the occupation of all the pits and mining colonies by hundreds of gendarmes, in spite of colossal endeavours of the reformist apparatus to break the strike, seven pits in the Silesian part of the Ostrau district came out. In two days the strike spread altogether to thirteen pits and embraced 8,000 mineworkers. The State apparatus answered by shooting, two mineworkers being killed and a number wounded. The police forbade any sort of strike agitation, no meetings, even if they were of T.U. groups or committees (!), were tolerated. In spite of that, great demonstrations took place in Karwina.

On March 31, the first three pits in Kladno came out on strike. Here also in a few days the strike spread to all the pits in the district with the exception of two.

Thus the prophecy of the secretary of the Social-Fascist Union, Brozik, was contradicted by events. A week before the strike, at a private meeting, he had said that in the Ostrau district "nothing would move them." Thus all the Social-Fascist and liquidatory prophecies were given the lie, prophecies which the day before the strike were confidently declaiming that there in Kladno no action would be taken.

Now the Social-Fascists began to manœuvre. For Ostrau an agreement was made that the notices fixed already for April 1st should for the time being be withdrawn, and that *during negotiations* no worker would be discharged. The Government forbade for the time being the dismissal of the workers at the Humboldt pit and the Nelson pit in Northern Bohemia. The Social-Fascists brought into Parliament the proposals for the nationalisation of the mines.

And while all their organisations, the Czechish Social-Democrats, Svaz, the German Social-Democratic Union, the Czech-Socialist, Jednota, the Hakenkreuzler (the Czechish Fascists) and the Christian Socialists in Ostrau, in Kladno, in the small mining area of Falkenau, where in consequence of the lack of brown coal there arose a boom, all these organisations, together with the State apparatus, strangled the "wild" strike, organised open strike-breaking, terrorised their own membership to drive them back to work, and adopted in the Northern Bohemian district, where they were compelled by mass pressure of their own members, a "flexible" tactic.

The Social-Democrats were the most determined strike-breakers. They continued to denounce the strike as "wild," again forbade (certainly without

success) their members to take part in the strike leadership, and carried on a shameless persecution of the strikers, against whom their Minister sent gendarmes and military forces. They no longer dared directly to summon their members to work. They now took up a "neutral" stand and left the responsibility to the "Communist witches."

The Czechish Socialists were still more "elastic." They declared the strike to be "correct," but "undertaken at an inopportune time." They did not forbid their people to participate in the strike leadership (although it wouldn't have made any difference if they had). In speeches at the meetings of the mineworkers they attempted to support the "correct" struggle and at the same time permitted the gendarmes and soldiers to shoot down the miners, gendarmes and soldiers whom their Minister sent into the district. At the same time they strangled the strike in all other areas in order to isolate the Brüx strikers.

The Hakenkreuzler went the furthest. They were on all strike committees, voted for all the Communist proposals, carried through all decisions (for they must, if they were not to lose all influence) . . . but simultaneously, together with the Social-Democratic bureaucrats, throttled the strike in Falkenau.

In the meantime Parliament met. The Communists put forward as their proposals the demands of the strikers: Ban on dismissals for a year, shortening of the working day, tax on the profits of the coal barons for the benefit of the unemployed mineworkers, immediate recall of the gendarmerie and military forces. . . The Social-Fascists, who had just put forward the proposal for "nationalisation of the mines," voted against these proposals and exposed themselves in the eyes of their own members.

The concrete proposals for the continuance, extension, and increasing of the fight unveiled the false "friends" of the mineworkers in the districts. The mineworkers were clearly persuaded of the correctness of the Communist estimation of the Social-Fascist leaders.

On March 31, there occurred, however, a serious repulse to the hitherto continually extending strike front. As it was not possible for the Mähr (Ostrau) part of the Ostrau-Karwin district to come out with the others (for the Social-Democrats have a predominant influence in this part), the Silesian pits began to vacillate and at some pits in Silesian Ostrau the strike collapsed. In the eastern part, in Karwin and Orlau, the strikers held fast and over 80 per cent. of the men were out. But in the absence of the leading Party representative, who led the strike in the Ostrau area, the Ostrau comrades, in spite of strictly contrary instructions from the Centre, made a fatal mistake and broke the strike without close examination of the situation and without taking the decision of the workers themselves. The miners went into the pits, but still their fighting determination was so great that the employers dare not provoke them by any kind of persecution. At the funeral of the shot comrades, 25,000 mineworkers vowed to avenge themselves and resolved to take up the fight again as quickly as possible.

Still the breach in the fight had great effect. In Kladno the strike began to crumble away; it was necessary, after the exhaustion of all means for continuing it, to secure an organised retreat. In the small districts, where preparations had been made to join in the fight, it was necessary either to be satisfied with a demonstrative strike (Rossitz and Handlovia in Slovakia, where the demands were partially achieved) or single strikes which quickly caved in (Falkenau).

In the Ostrau district itself the Centre corrected the mistake. On April 3 a new conference of Red mineworkers was held with the participation of a number of Reformist delegates. The mistake of the Ostrau leadership was openly criticised by the Centre with the support of the worker delegates. The stoppage of the breakaway which had begun was thereby urged and the conference voted unanimously and enthusiastically for resumption of the strike in the next few days. Nevertheless, during the following week (April 3 to 10) only individual pits came out on strike, and it was not yet possible, through the continuance at work of the "Social-Democratic" pits in the Ostrau area, to win for strike action the decisive part of the district.

In this situation the bourgeoisie directed all their forces on the Northern Bohemia district in order to strangle the strike there. The employers gave out communications in which they demanded an immediate return to work. The authorities issued a decree on April 1 announcing that the Brüx Central Strike Committee was an "illegal body," since, it was alleged, the withdrawal of the notices at the Humboldt pit (which had provided the immediate cause of the breaking of the strike front) had taken away the grounds for strike. On the same day all the Reformist unions and the Czechish Social-Fascists called conferences of their organisations and directed their huge authority (among their big guns was the member of the Senate, Soukup, and member of the Executive of the Second International), towards carrying through the return to work on the 4th April.

Still the mineworkers put up their measures of resistance. After the dissolution of the strike leadership committee the Red Mineworkers' Union alone took over the leadership of the strike, called upon the mineworkers to persevere in and to sharpen the struggle. In the whole country the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia organised demonstrations and demonstrative strikes against the dissolution of the elected organ of struggle. As early as the 3rd of April a Unity conference of mineworkers was held in Brüx in which 774 delegates took part, 185 of whom were unorganised and 144 members of Reformist and Fascist organisations. The conference decided unanimously in favour of continuance of the struggle, demonstratively re-elected all members of the dissolved strike leadership on to a new strike committee, declared that this alone had the right to represent the strikers, withdrew its permission for the transportation of the coal already hauled for necessary social services until such time as the new strike leadership was recognised by the authorities; and called for a mass meeting on April 5th of the whole district at Brüx.

Meanwhile the Reformist conference met. The workers and the members of the leading organs of the strike, showed their sharp opposition to the strike-breaking leaders. The leaders were outvoted, and found it necessary to call a stop to the summons for the return to work; their resolutions were defeated by a majority.

The Social-Fascists were surprised. As early as the 4th April an organ of the Czechish Socialists declared: "To-day all the Northern Bohemian miners will go back to work." Already in the evening of the same day they adopted another tone: for in the whole district not a single mineworker had returned to work.

Deputations of mineworkers threatened the withdrawal of the safety workers if the strike leadership were not recognised. The authorities were forced to recognise the new strike committee and their officials made a request for permission for the transport of coal which two days before had been withdrawn, since they viewed the hindrance of the free disposition of the coal baron's accumulated supplies as an "illegal" act.

The demonstration in Brüx was permitted. On the 5th April all the gendarmerie, police and military forces disappeared from the streets; 40,000 workers from the whole district marched in unity to Brüx and expressed their determination to continue the struggle until victory. Numerous enterprises stopped work. The movement became so much strengthened that the petty bourgeoisie were carried along with it. As an example of solidarity the shopkeepers closed the shops, and distributed foodstuffs among the demonstrators.

Throughout the whole land meetings were held in which masses of Reformist workers took part, in spite of the prohibition of their leaders. A broad solidarity action developed in numerous meetings and demonstrations. This was linked up with the contemporary anti-war week which was particularly strong in Slovakia. In Brünn, under the influence of the struggle of the miners, several thousand textile workers came out on strike. In Pilsen a strong movement was started against the dismissals in the Skoda works.

Even in the Carpathian-Ukraine there took place solidarity demonstrations and protest strikes (Uzhorod, Mukacevo, Bockov, Akna-Slatina).

Again the bourgeoisie adopted an intensified terror. The Government sent Dragoons into the district which rode through the towns and villages with drawn sabres. At some pits an attempt was made, under gendarmerie and military protection, to transport the accumulated coal.

As an answer to this and as a further intensification of the struggle the strike leadership decided on a one-day general strike of all workers in the Northern Bohemia district for Wednesday, 13th April, and called for mighty demonstrations.

On 10th April, in Komotau, Aussig, Dux, Brüx and Teplitz conferences of the working people were held. Workers from all branches of industry as well as numerous members of the middle class and their organisations were represented. One conference was broken up by the authorities; at the rest, the workers fought for legality. The general strike was everywhere unanimously supported and measures were taken for its carrying through.

Now the bourgeoisie decided upon a trial of strength. The Reformist unions forbade participation in the general strike. The demonstrations were forbidden; military forces and the gendarmerie appeared in masses; the Government put its whole power and prestige in frustrating the general strike and the mass meeting

But in vain. At once the majority of the enterprises in the Brüx, Dux and Komotau areas came out on strike. In Oberleutensdorf, in the forenoon, collisions took place. Thereupon more enterprises came out on strike, as well as the workers on an electric railway line. From all sides the masses marched to Brüx. The authorities shot at the crowd; in Brüx some workers were killed. The enraged masses defended themselves. Cavalry charges were repulsed by barricades. Dragoons were wounded and also taken prisoner by the masses. Police officers were

beaten up. In Komotau the workers burned the motor lorries in which the gendarmerie reinforcements had been brought up. Only in Dux, where the authorities permitted the demonstration, were the proceedings peaceful. In short; the masses captured the streets, they did not permit themselves to be intimidated, the strike held fast.

A new wave of protest strikes and demonstrations took place over the whole country. This time there were protest strikes in Cesko-Moravska, the biggest factory in Prague, in the Reichenberger textile mills, demonstrations in Pilsen, Brünn and Königgrätz. In Reichenberg the authorities attempted to strangle the protest movement by arresting all the higher Party functionaries. Mass protests demanded their liberation. Under the influence of the workers, even the Reformist members of the factory committee at the Pilsen Skoda works demanded the resignation of the Minister of the Interior, only in order, it is true, to divert the workers.

And at the funeral demonstration of the murdered workers, 50,000 demonstrators took part. As the State power did not venture to appear upon the streets the demonstration was held without any collisions.

Meanwhile, the Ostrau district ended the strike for the third time. In the days during which the Social-Fascists hoped to throttle the strike, they had entered into a shameful pact with the coal barons: they gave them the right to dismiss workers individually, which meant acceding the permission to dismiss up to 10 per cent. of the employees. Concerning further dismissals they agreed to a short-time rota, which meant that every month 12,000 mineworkers would be stood off for an unpaid holiday, whereby they would, in the month that they worked, have to pay the insurance contributions for two months; they accepted wage reductions of the mineworkers up to 20 per cent.

This inevitably let loose a storm of indignation in the district and also opened the eyes of those mineworkers who hitherto had believed in the Social-Fascists.

The Red Union, which was represented at the negotiations, immediately informed the mineworkers and mobilised them to defence, and also constantly at the negotiations, put forward the demand of "Not a man to be dismissed, not a farthing off the pay." And they refused naturally to sign the agreement. All the other organisations signed the agreement.

On 10th April the conference of the organisations met. The Social-Fascists refused to call a united-front conference, although they had previously given assurances that the Unity conference alone would take the decision.

The conference of the Red Union, supported by the participation of 434 pit delegates, 54 of whom were from organisations and 57 of whom were unorganised, rejected the pact and again decided for strike.

But also in the other conferences the opposition organised a stormy resistance against the leaders. The Czechish Socialists and the Christian Socialists rejected the pact; among the Social-Democrats the leaders found it necessary to adopt a new manœuvre and permitted a secret vote in their groups; among the Czechish Fascists the leaders decided to agree to the pact only under the pretence that other organisations had already done so.

In this way the situation called for a new strike. On 13th April, the day of the Northern Bohemian strike, there took place in Peterswald, a new, and this time, really broad Unity conference, at which over 1,000 delegates participated, among them hundreds of non-Communists. The decision to strike was taken. In spite of the most raging terror, armed occupation of the pits, prohibition of all meetings, anti-strike decisions of all other organisations, twenty pits, with 16,000 men, came out on strike until the 17th April. This time the basis was much broader. The strike had also enveloped some "social-democratic" pits on the Mähr side of the district; Reformist and Fascist organised workers joined in the strike, also some of the functionaries of these organisations participated in spite of the order of their leaders. At the pits broadly-elected strike committees began to be established.

But also this third strike met with a frightful terror on the part of the reactionary trade-union leaders and the State apparatus. And as the number of strikers were only to a small extent firmly organised, the strike broke down under this terror. On 18th and 19th April work had been resumed at a number of pits; at others the Communists remained isolated. In these conditions it was necessary for the Party to give the lead for calling off the strike.

In the Brüx district the coal barons and the authorities found it convenient, after all these struggles, finally to enter into negotiations. Besides the parties to the agreement (that is, Reformists and Fascists) they also invited the Red Unions; but, nevertheless, they refused to invite the strike committee. At the opening of the negotiations the representative of the Red Union energetically demanded the invitation of the strike committee. After the Social-Fascists were turned down at the enterprises, the strike leadership empowered the representative of the

Red Union also to represent them, and the Red Union declared that it would not be willing to sign any settlement without the endorsement of the strike committee.

The result of the negotiations was the acceptance of a pact which the Social-Fascists already previously had agreed to with the employers and the authorities. The conditions, as a result of the influence of the united struggle, were incomparably better than the conditions of the Ostrau pact, but they did not fulfil many demands of the strikers and left open all possibilities for dismissals and wage reductions. The conditions were: the notices to the Humboldt pit to be withdrawn until the end of 1933. Individual dismissals should be admissible, mass dismissals inadmissible except if all the pits of a company should be unable to keep working more than three days in the week. Overtime should not be permissible, also the filling of the wagons during the day when not hauled, should only take place in exceptional circumstances.

A general pardon to be given to the members of all the organisations which immediately signed the pact, with the others persecution to be applied.

This last condition the representative of the Red Union was to be compelled to sign without consultation with the strike committee. The comrades refused. The strike committee called a new Unity conference for Sunday, April 18th. This Unity conference firmly declared that the pact did not answer the demands of the strikers and that the leaders of the coalition of the unions had betrayed the rightful demands. They passed sharp judgment on their policy, decided unitedly to continue the strike, and called a new conference for the 20th April, which according to circumstances would decide further.

The Reformists put the brake on at their conferences and this time were successful—certainly with resistance from the worker delegates — in carrying through a decision for the termination of this strike. Thereby the leaders finally restrained the Social-Democrats as well as the Czechish Socialists.

And this time also the Hakenkreuzler put forward a secret ballot and called upon their people to abandon the strike committee. Their leaders abandoned the Unity conference, but the workers remained and condemned their treachery.

On Monday, 18th April, the Unity conference again scored a victory over the Social-Fascist strike-breaking tactics. In the centre of the district, in the Brüx and Dux areas, the strike remained unbroken. All the Dux pits were at a complete standstill. In the Rand area, particularly around Teplitz, the strike, however, began to crumble away. There at the Unity conference, held on April 19th, it was decided to end the strike in order to maintain the unity of the workers, which was the most valuable feature of the fight.

Against any kind of measures of persecution or new offensive of the coal barons the workers would remain unitedly prepared for strike. The strike committees would be transformed into unity committees and arranged, as the next general task, to create great demonstrations for the 1st May. So ran the unanimous resolution of the conference.

On 20th April the mineworkers unitedly returned to work. Although the "general pardon" included only the Reformists, the employers did not dare to attempt any persecution.

* * *

I have described the course of the struggle in order to make it possible for foreign comrades to get an understanding of the concrete situations in which the Party decided upon the individual tactical measures.

Now I will deal with the most important lessons.

The most decisive question in every strike under present-day conditions — where the great majority of workers are not yet under our influence — *is the correct application of the united-front tactic.* In the Northern Bohemia strike the united-front tactic during the whole struggle was correctly—one might say exemplarily—applied. The struggle ended there with a considerable material partial success and with an undisputed political victory of the Communist Party. In the Ostrau district, where the united-front tactic was applied only with serious mistakes, no success was achieved in spreading and holding the strike over the whole area, despite the heroic endeavours of the revolutionary section of the mineworkers; the coal barons on the whole exerted their dominance and the political success was much smaller.

In what consists the essence of the correct application of the united-front tactic in the Northern Bohemia district? Firstly, in that the Party understood how to win the great mass of mineworkers for every demand and every tactical measure, and so to select their proposals and measures of struggle that they were understandable to the great masses and regarded as necessary, while at the same time the Social-Fascist and Fascist leaders were forced into the position of openly serving capitalism.

Secondly, that on the initiative of the Party and the Red Unions at all pits in all areas, united-front organs were created, broadly and really democratically elected and acknowledged by all

workers; which really led the fight and enjoyed an enormous authority among the workers.

In almost all strike committees and also in the Central Strike Committee in Brüx the non-Communists were in a majority. On these committees workers from all organisations, Czechish and German Social-Democrats, Czechish National Socialists, followers of the Czechish Fascist Narodny Sdruzeni, German Hakenkreuzler, Christian Socialists and unorganised workers were represented. These strike committees operated permanently, dealt with all questions, accepted in every instance the proposals of the Communists. It can be said that in the Northern Bohemia strike there was not a single important decision made, not a single tactical turn carried through, about which the Central Committee of the Party had not previously decided. But, not a single one of these decisions was carried through before the democratically-elected organs of the whole of the striking workers, the strike committees, had thoroughly discussed and accepted it. The Communists had undisputed leadership in the united-front organs, but this leadership was not mechanical. The Communists took the lead because they had the greatest experience and initiative, because they always came forward with the correct proposals at the opportune moment, and all workers were persauded of their correctness and necessity.

Thereby the decisions of the strike committees stood openly under the control of all strikers. The majority of the decisions of the central strike leadership were unanimously taken up. When, however, in one instance, a Reformist member vacillated during the day and on one decision abstained from voting, he was, the same evening, called before the miners he represented, to give a report and was so belaboured by the workers, among whom also were many Reformist members, that the next day he declared in the Central Strike Committee that he saw his mistake and was persuaded of the correctness of the resolution.

The resolutions of the Central Strike Committee were carried through by all the strikers with enthusiasm. Frequently it happened that huge meetings of strikers in the localities (which actually were not permitted by the authorities and were really "illegal") waited several hours in order to receive from the delegates who had been to the Central Strike Committee a report on the resolutions of that body in order to be able to carry them through at once. Without waiting for the resolution of the Central Strike Committee the safety men refused to remain at work. Without permission of the Central Strike Committee not a single piece of the coal already brought to the top of the pits dare be transported, and in the ante-room of the Central Strike Committee the directors of the hospitals, the schools, the electricity and water-works and extinguished glass factory waited to beg permission for the transport of some wagons of coal. Even the officials of the Borough and the Garrison, nay, even the mining companies who required coal for their offices, visited the Strike Committee in order to appeal for their permission that from their "own" depôts, coal might be transported for their "own" offices. Naturally, all these requests, except those from the hospitals and the schools, were rejected. But they revealed the authority and power which the Strike Committee enjoyed. This authority extended, by the way, not only over the strikers, but also over other sections of the working class. The unemployed and working women carried through the resolutions of the Strike Committee, on which they had their representatives, with the same enthusiasm and discipline. When the strike leadership called for a general strike of the whole district on the 13th April, and confirmed their resolution at five broad Unity conferences, the majority of the factories in the districts struck work. When they summoned the closing of the shops, the small traders and shop people closed their shops, although it was forbidden by the authorities, and a fine for disobeying the order imposed. And after the end of the strike a deputation from a Brüx factory came to the strike leaders with a request that the Strike Committee should take up and organise the fight of the workers at this factory, who were completely unorganised, and engage in a wage struggle.

The authorities had attempted to dissolve the Strike Committee. This was not possible, thanks to the mass resistance of the workers. Two days after the dissolution of the strike committees (which was caused, among other things, by the fact that the strike leaders had had the "arrogance" to decide on the question of the transportation of coal out of the depôts which, after all, belonged to the employers), it was necessary for the authorities to again recognise the strike leadership, and the Borough officials presented their official request for a quantity of coal, which two days before they had withdrawn. If the strike leadership resolved to organise a demonstration, it was carried through whether the authorities permitted it or not. And in the end things developed so far that the Borough official of Komotau heatedly asked a Communist functionary: "Who actually is the Borough official here? I or you?"

The drawing in of the Reformist workers in the united-front organs awoke the initiative of

the masses and provided the strike with hundreds of new functionaries. In the Northern Bohemia fight, there was certainly no scarcity of functionaries. The whole day long in the headquarters of the Central Strike Committee, dozens of mineworkers were at hand, ready to go as messengers or as reporters in the localities and to the pits. In almost all places, local district and pit committees held mass meetings daily. In this common work the united front of the fighters was welded firmly together. The summons of the Social-Democratic leaders to resign from the common strike committee was simply taken no notice of by the Reformist workers. And when, in critical moments—after the breaking of the first Ostrau strike—the Social-Fascists called together conferences of their organisations and through their functionaries sought to carry through the breaking of this strike behind the backs of the strikers, they came up against the vigorous resistance of their own functionaries and were turned down by their own conferences.

There were individual comrades who, at the beginning of the strike, worked so defectively that the leading rôle of the Communist Party was hardly at all expressed. They saw the "defect" in that all decisions should be planned and announced in the name of the elected strike committees. They would rather have seen the leading rôle of the Party expressed perhaps in the fact that at the headquarters of the strike committee, the inscription "Office of the Central Strike Committee" should have had in addition the words, "Under the leadership of the Communist Party"! But the leading rôle of the Party is not expressed by declamations and mechanical instruction. The mineworkers struggled so unitedly and determinedly against all foes—including the Social-Fascist leaders—because they were conscious of the fact that they themselves, by means of their elected united-front organs, determined the leadership of the struggle. And in these organs they accepted all the proposals of the Communists and enthusiastically carried them out because they were themselves persuaded of the correctness and necessity of these proposals. When the first strike committee was dissolved by the authorities and the Red mineworkers' union alone took in its hands the leadership of the strike, all strikers understood that and welcomed it. They were evidently convinced that it was the only trade-union organisation which will and can lead their struggle successfully. When the coal barons refused to negotiate with the strike committee, the Central Strike Committee unanimously entrusted the representative of the Red mineworkers' trade union to represent the strike committee and all the strikers at the negotiations, while the Red mineworkers' union declared that without the endorsement of the strike committee they would have no truck with any decision made at the negotiations. In the unanimous resolutions of the united-front conferences at which non-Communists were more numerous and finally were in a great majority, the strike-breaking rôle of the Social-Fascist and Fascist leaders continually became more and more evident. And at the end of the strike a huge conference (over 1,000 present) in which the Communists composed hardly a quarter, resolved unanimously that the Red union had alone defended the interests of the miners against the strike-breaking of the leaders of all the other organisations, and called for mass recruiting into the Red union.

To-day in Czecho-Slovakia there is not a single rational person who is able to deny that the strike of the mineworkers was led by the Communists.

Still, this leadership cannot come into being mechanically, but through the initiative, through energetically, consciously and dexterously setting up the broad united-front organs which work independently, which develop the initiative of the masses, which hold fast together the unity of the fighters, and which win for themselves enormous authority.

Through the initiative of the Communists and the conviction of the broad masses of their correctness, the "left" manœuvre of the Social-Fascists in the Northern Bohemia struggle was also exposed.

The Social-Democratic leaders placed themselves openly against the strike from the beginning. They declared it to be a "wild" strike, refused participation at the start, campaigned against the strikers in their Press in the wildest manner, and sent gendarmerie and the military into the district. Several times they attempted, behind the backs of the strikers, to send out orders to return to work and thus break the strike. When they were not able to achieve this and were defeated at their own conferences, they began to "tolerate" the strike, although they "rejected all responsibility," and ordered their members to come out of the strike committees. These instructions, however, were not followed by their members, and in Northern Bohemia the Social-Democratic leaders were powerless; for which also the bourgeois Press very sharply reproved them.

On the other hand, the leaders of the National-Socialists attempted to apply an "elastic" tactic of breaking the strike. After their first attempt at open strike-breaking had run aground, they announced their "solidarity" with the Northern Bohemian strike, but at the same time attempted to throttle the struggle in all the other districts,

in order to isolate the Northern Bohemian mineworkers, and they regarded with favour all the Government measures for the forceful suppression of the strike.

The Hakenkreuzler, in their manœuvres, went still further. They participated officially in the strike committees, voted there—because they were forced to—for all the fighting resolutions, and carried them out. At the same time, together with the Social-Democratic leaders, which they otherwise savagely "attacked," they throttled the strike in the Falkenau district. And at the decisive moment of the struggle they recalled their members from the strike committees and negotiated in secret with the Ministry over the signing of the agreement which had been turned down by the Unity conference. Thereby they exposed themselves before their own members, and instead of securing the expected victory at the expense of Social-Democracy, there now developed among their members a movement of recruitment into the Red union.

How did the Communists oppose these manœuvres? They exposed the "false friends" of the mineworkers in that they put before the masses clear proposals for the further development, extension and intensification of the struggle, which were obvious and understandable to every Reformist worker, but were unacceptable to the agents of capital. Therefore, the workers were persuaded by their own experience of the treacherous rôle of the Social-Fascist and Fascist leaders, and of the deceitfulness of their phrasemongering.

One of the manœuvres deserves special attention. During the struggle, the Czechish Social-Democrats and National Socialists, put forward in Parliament the proposals for the "Nationalisation of the Mines." The Party castigated this swindle and explained to the workers that within the framework of capitalism the nationalisation of industry is impossible, that the State ownership of an individual enterprise—even if it were possible—would signify a still greater exploitation and repression of the workers. The Party, however, was not content merely with this propaganda of exposure.

In accordance with the demands of the Central Strike Committee, the Communist parliamentary fraction put forward the following proposals: That until the end of the year all dismissals at the pits be forbidden; that the net profits of the coal barons be heavily taxed for the benefit of the unemployed mineworkers; the six-hour day with full wage-compensation be introduced in the pits; inspection over the protection of life and health of the mineworkers be placed in the control of organs elected by the workers; the gendarmerie and the military be immediately withdrawn from the districts and the strikers guaranteed full freedom for meetings and demonstrations. The Social-Fascists, together with other bourgeois parties, rejected all these proposals. And thereby their swindle of "nationalisation" was completely exposed even before the most backward workers. "How can we believe that they are earnest about nationalisation"—declared the workers—"if they reject the mere prohibition of dismissals for a year and taxation of the profits of the coal masters?"

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While one can describe the Northern Bohemia strike as a model of correct application of the united-front tactic, one can, on the other hand, find serious mistakes in the application of the same tactic in the strike in the Ostrau-Karwin district.

The objective situation in this district was still more favourable than in Northern Bohemia. The attack of the employers was much more severe and directly threatened 12,000 mineworkers with dismissals, and the rest with wage reductions up to 30 per cent.

The preparatory campaign, which had already been carried through since the summer of the previous year, was, also in Ostrau, quite good. As a result of small fights, a number of demonstrations, demonstrative strikes and also small strikes (at the Wilzek pits, for example) the district was so well prepared that the Social-Fascists were compelled to meet the enormous militancy of the mineworkers by announcement of the employers' new attack and their determination to fight; and by means of thoroughgoing "left" manœuvres.

The Social-Fascist leaders declared that it was impossible to lie down before the dictatorship of the coal masters; in their agitation they made the slogan of the Red union, "Not a man off the job, not a farthing off the pay," sound as if it were their own; they declared that unity was the great need, declared that all previous discords should be forgotten, and invited the Red mineworkers' union to the negotiations with the coal barons, although they were not parties to the collective agreement; and they called a united conference of all the factory councils and chairmen of the trade-union groups of all the unions.

At this moment the opportunistic mistake of the Ostrau district leadership began. It had its roots in the false theory of the "double-edgedness" of the Social-Fascist "left" manœuvres. The Ostrau comrades thought that the Social-Fascist leaders involuntarily radicalise the masses by their

"left" manœuvre and thus make it easier for us to approach the Reformist workers. Consequently we must not exert ourselves so much with criticism since "for the time being" the Reformist workers would not yet understand We only need to say "Yes" and "Amen" to the promises of the Social-Fascists, and in the course of the struggle the traitors would quickly expose themselves. From that resulted, at the beginning of the fight, an essentially *passive, waiting*, tactic. The Ostrau comrades argued that the coal barons would stick to their dictates and finally the Social-Fascists would be compelled, under the pressure of the masses, either to begin the struggle or to refuse to do so *and then* we would show them up and begin with *our* action. Conclusively and finally this false theory of the "double-edgedness" of the "left" manœuvres of the Social-Fascist leaders led to the liquidation of the principle of *independent* leadership of the economic struggles.

The comrades fundamentally misunderstood the meaning of the "left" manœuvres. The "left" manœuvre was not the *cause* but *the consequence of the already-experienced* radicalisation of the masses. Their subjective and objective significance was not a possibility of our approach to the Reformist workers, not the erection for us of a bridge to the Reformist workers, but, on the contrary, the Social-Fascist leaders aimed, by this manœuvre, at erecting a new barrier between us and the radicalised masses, in order to catch hold of the leftward-swinging masses and again deceive them in the interests of capital.

The "participation" of the Social-Fascist leaders in the struggle was certainly not quite excluded from the perspective, but only as a by-product of our course of the independent development of the strike. The Social-Fascists would "accompany," but only when there should really be no other way—if we should have beaten them among the masses. And *only for this reason*—in order to ensure new influence through "accompanying" the struggle, and with it break the strike. In every case our chief task was the line of independent leadership of the struggle even in the first stage of the conflict, and consequently the ruthless criticism of the Social-Fascist leaders, the entry into the struggle with independent initiative and the erection of a united front from below against the will of the bureaucrats was the precondition for this.

The Ostrau comrades did not understand that. In spite of opposite instructions from the Centre they went to the Unity conference of the 5th March without their own resolution and their own proposals for the immediate preservation and development of the fight. They even gave their support to a "unity" resolution, which indeed was not lacking in radical phrases, but which assured the mineworkers that all organisations were now in unison, that the destiny of the struggle rested in good hands, that the mineworkers should wait and not undertake anything without the decision of the trade union. It was a direct warning of the need for initiative in the construction of the united front from below; it was a substitute of the united front from below by the false "unity" from above.

No wonder then that in the following week, all endeavours to create a real united-front organ at the pits came to nothing. Our comrades, by their support of the resolution, had themselves actually given ammunition for use against the creation of these organs; and the Reformist workers did not see their necessity if "without that everything was already united above."

The Centre of the Communist Party of Czecho-Slovakia immediately criticised this mistake in the sharpest terms and also laid bare its roots. The Ostrau comrades acknowledged this criticism. They began, two days after the conference, to criticise sharply the Social-Fascists. But the mistake had already brought about a certain fear in the mass of mineworkers and to a certain extent also among our own cadres. And the Ostrau comrades did not energetically enough fight against this frame of mind. The fateful "waiting" tactic had dug itself in too deeply. The Reformist workers were persauded that the decision as regards the fight must be held over until the conclusion of the negotiations with the employers. And a section of our own comrades remained of this persuasion—that before the termination of these negotiations nothing could be commenced.

In the meantime the Northern Bohemia strike began. The Centre took up the quite correct line of extending the strike to a general strike of mineworkers and gave the lead also to Ostrau, instructing them that the strike should be begun without waiting until the end of the negotiations, in which already the Social-Fascists had openly betrayed the mineworkers.

The outbreak of the first Ostrau strike which very quickly covered more than a third of the district showed the correctness of this decision. The Social-Fascists were surprised, the strike expanded itself. Under its influence the Kladno district came into the struggle and some small areas (Rositz, Falkenau, Handlova) made preparations for a quick entry into the fight.

Nevertheless, the old mistake avenged itself. It was not possible, in the Mähr half of the district where the Social-Fascists had predominant influence, to bring them quickly enough into the fight. It was not possible because the Reformist

workers, as a result of our mistake, still had faith in the Social-Fascists and awaited the course of the negotiations. And when the strike was broken at three of the twelve pits which had come out, the Ostrau comrades fell into a panic, and despite strict telephonic instructions to the contrary from the Centre, they passed the fateful resolution to call off the strike at all the pits. This took place without consultation with the strikers and their organs. This took place despite the fact that, as we shall show later, on the day of the breaking of the strike, over 80 per cent. of the workers, according to the official report of the employers, remained firm, and in place of the three pits who had gone back, two new pits joined in the strike. This break, which took place against the will of the Centre and the majority of the strikers, was a heavy blow against the extension of the strike into a general strike of mineworkers of all districts. Under its influence the struggle in the Kladnau district began to crumble away, which, despite all endeavours, continued for a week up to the collapse of the strike. Under its influence the strike movement in Rositz, Halkenau and Handlova did not develop to a stoppage of work in these small district. And against the Northern Bohemia district, the Social-Fascists, employers and the State apparatus concentrated the whole of their attack, which, nevertheless, was repulsed by the correct application of the united-front tactic.

This mistake of the Ostrau comrades was also not accidental. It was a result of their failure to tirelessly root out the "waiting tactic." They went into the first struggle without being correctly persuaded of the right line and as a consequence of this capitulated at the first big difficulty, although the course of the strike itself gave the lie to their pessimism. Besides that, it was revealed—quite the contrary to Northern Bohemia—that there was at this first strike in Ostrau and its break, an underestimation of the organs of the united front, and the false attempts to substitute the united-front decisions by the decisions of the Party leadership, and council-board ordinances made without the consultation of all the workers.

The Centre again intervened, criticised before the mineworkers the mistakes which had been begun, energetically explained the question of the independent leadership of the struggle, and two days after the breakaway the conference of the Red Mineworkers' Union, with participation of the Reformist worker delegations, unanimously adopted a new strike resolution.

In the second and particularly in the third strike at Ostrau the mistake was corrected. The whole district revolted against the treacherous pact which, in the meantime, had been signed by the Social-Fascists and Fascists. In the third strike we led already twenty pits into the strike, among them also some purely "reformist" and "Fascist" pits, against the will of their treacherous leaders. The third strike was led upon a broad united-front basis from below. But this third strike did not indeed lead to material success. It was not possible to tear up the treacherous pact; but it was a political success for the Party. It made it evident to the masses that it is possible to fight and that the Communists and the Red trade unions are the only people which defend the interests of the mineworkers. It powerfully shattered the position of the Social-Fascists and particularly the Fascist *Narodny Sdreziny*. That was revealed in the Municipal Elections which followed in some mining areas, where all opponents lost heavily and the Communists were easily victorious. It was revealed in the great increase of the number of demonstrators on the 1st May and finally also in a comparatively big recruitment into the Red Mineworkers' Union (after this strike the Union in the Ostrau district won about 1,000 new members).

But if this Reformist mistake had not been made at the beginning of the strike the success would have been much greater and the Ostrau Mineworkers would perhaps have warded off the attack of the employers in the form of a general strike of all mineworkers in Czecho-Slovakia. The Ostrau mistake should now be studied, together with the great positive experiences of Northern Bohemia as well as of the Ostrau struggle, in a broad enlightenment campaign. They show together with the immensely important lessons of the correct application of the united-front tactic in Northern Bohemia, the dangers of its false opportunistic misrepresentation and the danger of the false theory of the automatic "double-edgedness" of the Social-Fascist "left" manœuvre.

Still a few words on the termination of the Northern Bohemian strike: In order to assure the greatest possible material and political success, it is certainly very important to choose the right moment for the termination of the strike.

The Social-Fascist and Fascist Unions, as was known, had concluded an agreement with the employers in the Northern Bohemian district behind the backs of the mineworkers. This pact contained some concessions of the coalmasters. The dismissals at the pits, which constituted a direct cause for the outbreak of the strike, were postponed for a year. The coalmasters promised the whole of the district that "on principle" they would carry through no mass dismissals. Several small demands of the strikers were acceded to

such as on the question of overtime, forbidding the filling of the wagons during the day when not hauled, etc. In comparison with the Ostrau pact there was a tremendous difference. There 12,000 mineworkers were to have compulsory short-time, wages were to be reduced up to 20 per cent. Here (in Northern Bohemia) no dismissals and no wage reductions were provided for.

Nevertheless the conditions of the Northern Bohemia pact were also completely insufficient and did not fulfil the demands of the strikers. The pact was full of reservations by means of which the coalmasters can evade all their obligations. And also in the principal question — protection against dismissals — the pact gave no real guarantee, for it contained the condition that mass dismissals are permissible in exceptional cases where the sale of coal would not once permit, the working of the pits in three shifts per week. The Northern Bohemian mineworkers saw, indeed, the tremendous difference between the pact for Ostrau where the employers were successful in throttling the strike, and the pact for Northern Bohemia which came into being under the pressure of their powerful and united strike. But they saw at the same time that they had been betrayed of the full fruits of their fight by the treachery of the Social-Fascist leaders, and that without this treachery of the Social-Fascist leaders it would have been possible to achieve much more.

The Social-Fascists and Fascists signed the pact unconditionally, and promised that the miners would return to work the following Monday. The Red Union refused to sign the pact and the unity conference also decided to reject it and to persevere in the struggle.

Once more it was possible to repel the concentrated attack. On the Monday the strike in the centre of the district stood firm. At all the bigger pits the workers struck solidly; the instructions of the Social-Fascists were not heeded. Still, at the periphery of the district the strike began to crumble, a number of small pits returned to work, and this time the Social-Fascist and Fascist leaders were able to carry through at the conferences of their organisations the resolution for stopping the strike. Thereby the treacherous leaders were again exposed before the masses, and this time also the Hakenkreuzler who had previously manœuvred so cunningly.

The strike had reached its apex. The political success, the confidence of the masses in the Communist Party was stronger than ever. All the enemies of the mineworkers were exposed and compromised.

The pact was indeed insufficient, but still it was a partial success and everybody was aware that the partial success was a result of the leadership of the strike and the Red union; its insufficiency, however, the result of the Social-Fascist and Fascist treachery.

On the other hand it was clear that the best guarantee against further attacks of the coalmasters lay not in the clauses of the pact but in resoluteness and unity, with which the fight would be conducted and with which the miners would also end it.

To carry on the strike, signified in the first place the perspective of a long struggle in the most solid centre of the district. On the other hand it meant a crumbling away at the periphery of the district and a struggle between the mineworkers themselves, between, on the one side, those who had persevered in the struggle, and on the other those who, having fought heroically for four weeks, had then, through hunger and treachery, preferred the unsatisfactory pact to a further lengthy strike.

The means for sharpening the strike in the district itself were for the most part already employed. As is well known, the strike had already previously been raised to a one-day general strike in the whole district with great illegal demonstrations and severe collisions with the armed forces. The strikers used excellently the threat to withdraw the safety men and flood the pits. They used the withdrawal as a threat after the dissolution of the first strike Committee and had compelled recognition of the newly-elected strike leadership. At some pits they withdrew the safety men since the authorities endeavoured under military protection to transport coal from the depôts.

The best chances for the continuation of the fight was naturally its extension, the leading of further sections of workers in the country into the struggle. Yet at this time there was no real prospect of a quick realisation of this.

The mineworkers' strike in Kladno was ended; in Ostrau it was impossible to take the whole district along in the struggle and the third partial strike in Ostrau was defeated by the forces of terror and the treachery of the Social-Fascists; the other small areas were forced to content themselves with partial struggles and demonstrations. In Brünn the textile workers' strike was already terminated.

In these circumstances the termination of the strike was the only correct thing to do. The struggle was ended at the moment of the greatest political success of the Communists and the proletarian united front. The mineworkers returned to the pits united and with fighting resoluteness. They were resolved to answer every attack of the employers with a new struggle.

This slogan was no empty phrase. Since the termination of the great struggle in the mining district of Northern Bohemia there have already been seven pit strikes. The cause was always the same. Some workers were late in starting work for the simple reason that they had been arrested, i.e., for accidental causes. The pact promised to take on only those who turned up for work at the right time. When, however, the pit managers refused to re-employ one worker only, the whole of the men came out on strike—with always the same result. In all the seven instances the bosses were forced to re-employ the men.

The strike committees remained together and transformed themselves into mineworkers' unity committees. At a number of pits campaigns were inaugurated for an immediate new election of the pit councils and it was possible thereby to win the legally prescribed two-thirds majority. The unity committee summoned a general Red May Day demonstration which took place with the participation of tens of thousands of workers of all political tendencies, while the Social-Fascist festivities shrunk into small gatherings. In the district an active recruiting campaign for the Red Mine Workers' Union took place. Whole groups of Reformists and Hakenkreuzler workers joined the Red Union. All this showed that the Party and the Red union had not only led the strike correctly but had also ended it at the most opportune moment in the correct manner; had thus created conditions for a shattering of the Fascist and the Social-Fascist influence in the district, and for a permanent strengthening of the revolutionary front.

The mineworkers' strike in Czecho-Slovakia has had great significance for the class struggle in that country. For the first time the Party and the Red Trade Unions, during a period of economic crisis, were able to lead independently a great mass strike. Of all the 80,000 mineworkers in all the districts, 55,000, even according to official statistics, took part in the strike.

In the Northern Bohemia district it was possible to bring the attack of the coalmasters to a standstill. In other districts proof was conclusively brought forth that the workers can fight and that the Communist Party is the only party which really defends the interests of the workers.

All the strike-breaking arguments of the Social-Fascists were contradicted through the struggle. It was shown that it is a lie to say that during crisis the workers cannot fight, for never before was the mineworkers' struggle in Northern Bohemia so united and so complete. It was revealed that the Social-Fascists had lied when they declared that the unemployed would stab the strikers in the back; on the contrary, the unemployed had supported the strike in exemplary fashion and at the end of the strike the Social-Fascists exposed the mendacity of their arguments themselves in that they said that only the unemployed prevented the mineworkers from returning to work (which naturally, was a new lie). The falsity of their arguments was revealed that without sufficient funds no strike could be successfully carried through, when on the one hand the miners without any regular support showed the greatest endurance in the strike, and on the other hand it was possible to organise a broad parallel solidarity campaign amongst all sections of the working class and, in spite of the prohibition of the reformist organisations, to collect hundreds of thousands of Kronen for the strikers. It was also revealed that the arguments of the Social-Fascists, that it was impossible to strike because the coalmasters had gigantic stores of coal at the depôts which they would sell during the strike, were an empty threat, as, for the first time in the history of Northern Bohemian miners' strikes, the strikers successfully prevented the transport of coal from the depôts, and at the end of the strike, there was a perceptible scarcity of brown coal.

The miners' strike revealed to the workers, particularly the Nationalist and Reformist adherents, the rôle of the bourgeois State apparatus; but it also revealed that it was possible to fight successfully against the severest terrorist measures. The mass of mineworkers fought for their right to strike and their right to the streets. Under their pressure the dissolved strike committees were again permitted. The general strike and the mass demonstration of the 13th April were carried out in spite of the ban, gendarmerie, military forces and the shooting.

The miners' strike showed clearly that by the consistent and dexterous application of the United Front from below, it is possible to come up successfully against the treachery and the strike-breaking of the Social-Fascists and the Fascist leaders. In the Northern Bohemia district the Reformist leaders were powerless. No one heeded their instructions. Their own carefully-sifted delegate conferences turned down their proposals. Their influence was tremendously shaken.

These lessons do not remain without effect on the broadest masses of the Czecho-Slovakian proletariat.

During the miners' strike we also had a rise of the strike movement in other districts. We had a strike of the *textile workers in Brünn* against the reduction of the cost of living increase, which, to be true, embraced only a part of the industry and after a few days was compelled to break up. But under this pressure the employers

no longer dared to reduce the whole cost of living increase and to a certain extent granted it. We had a strike in the *Rima Muranga Railway works* in East Slovakia. A strike lasting eight weeks was unitedly carried out in the *textile factory of Doubleby in East Bohemia* and ended, despite no material success, in the strengthening of the Red Trade Union. And of the support which the workers' struggle produced among the working masses the following incident is characteristic. In the Richter textile factory in Mildenau in Northern Bohemia, the employers gave notice to thirteen workers. Thereupon the whole of the workers, numbering 1,100 men, came out under the slogan of "Not a man off the job," and after three days enforced the re-employment of all the discharged men.

After the miners' strike a wave of strikes developed in a number of areas and branches of industry.

The building workers for some time led a successful small struggle against the attacks of the employers. According to the statistics of the Red Building Workers' Union, from the beginning of the year to the middle of April, 20,000 building and stoneworkers in 350 enterprises (building and quarries) had taken part in partial and demonstrative strikes under their leadership. During this period the Union had recruited 4,507 new members.

Now, however, the question of the transition to a greater strike in the building trade stands on the order of the day; a strike which will embrace the whole of the workers, in which tens of thousands of building workers, under the leadership of the elected strike committees, the organ of the united front, will carry on their successful struggle.

The *landworkers* in the Galanta territory in Slovakia (about 4,500 men) had fought a united struggle for a 30 per cent. wage increase on the existing wages, payment for overtime and the recognition of their elected and trusted representatives. This strike was carried out against the collective agreement signed by the Reformists. It was won in a district of the greatest terror where the previous year the notorious shooting took place in Kossuth. Now the strike encompasses a number of more distant areas of the Slovakian landworkers. In the Carpatho-Ukraine the strike of wine-workers ended with a partial victory.

In the textile industry there was a number of partial struggles. For July a great strike against wage reductions and rationalisation was prepared in the East and Northern Bohemia districts included in the agreement. The position is the same in many other branches of industry.

At an organisers' conference, the C.C. of the Czecho-Slovakian Party, after a thorough examination of the lessons of the miners' strike discussed and laid down concrete tasks for the development of the economic struggles in all spheres. It is expected that the attacks of the employers will come up against resolute resistance of the working masses organised by the Communists, and that they will lead to further mass struggles in the course of which the Communists will lead still broader masses and win them for the fight for the liberation of the working class. At the same time the Party mobilises the masses for resistance against the application in Czecho-Slovakia of emergency measures on the model of Brünning and Von Papen in Germany.

As is known, the rudder of the Czecho-Slovakian State has up to now been held by a "great coalition" of almost all the bourgeois and Social-Fascist parties, which possess a great majority in Parliament.

Still, in recent times, more and more frequent complaints have been made within the bourgeois camp that the Government acts too slowly and with insufficient energy, that Parliament is too lethargic, and that a great new form of government is required.

The rapid development of the crisis, the hopelessness of a quick realisation of the Tardieu middle-European plans leading to some kind of "amelioration" of the crisis, the shaking of the Social-Fascist influence over the masses, the success of the Communists, all make necessary a new manœuvre.

The bourgeoisie plans new attacks on the living standards of the working masses; reduction of wages and the salaries of civil servants; reduction of the wretched unemployment relief and the introduction of compulsory labour for the unemployed; new indirect taxes; reduction of rent protection, etc.

And above all the war plans of the Czechish bourgeoisie make quick action necessary.

For these reasons the tendency to displace the great coalition by a cabinet of officials or a "cabinet of personalities" grows rapidly, to set it up through a law of authorisation with full powers as in Germany Brüning had and Von Papen has to-day, to dissolve parliament, to drive forward in the severest manner against the revolutionary working class movement, up to the dissolution of the Communist Party. The first step towards that has been the banning of the W.I.R. and I.L.D. as well as the Young Communist League. The Social-Democrats would be able further to play their rôle of the chief social support of the bourgeoisie, but in a slightly altered form. They would reject all direct responsibility for the deeds of the "Government of the Strong

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LESSONS OF THE MINERS' STRIKE STRUGGLE IN THE RUHR IN 1931-32

By S. Perevoznikov.

IN the Ruhr district is represented one of the decisive sections of the class struggle in Germany. Despite the growing replacement of coal by new synthetic fuels, the Ruhr coal basin still remains the chief fuel and power base of Germany. In addition to coal, the leading section of the German metal industry is also located in the Ruhr. "The reduction of the cost of production and the increase of the competitive power of our industry can be begun only with the Ruhr," this slogan, thrown out by the "Bergwerkszeitung" (journal of the coal industry) already at the beginning of the introduction of capitalist rationalisation, has been stressed and enforced particularly during the years of the crisis. The capitalist solution of the crisis, which involves a reduction of the living standards of the working class, begins with, and in a great measure depends upon, a constant and strong pressure upon the workers, particularly of this coal and metal base of the German industry. And for this very reason the struggle of the Ruhr workers is of the greatest importance to the organisation of resistance and a counter-offensive of the German proletariat against the effort of the bourgeoisie to solve the crisis at the expense of the great toiling masses.

The C.P. of Germany and the revolutionary trade union opposition of the Ruhr province have been able to accumulate a great deal of experience in independent leadership of the economic struggle. The original application of this policy of independent leadership began in the Ruhr during the lockout of the 213,000 metal workers in 1928. The first mass strike prepared and conducted from the beginning to the end by the Red Trade-Union Opposition of Germany also took place in the Ruhr, namely the strike of 60,000 miners in 1931. For this reason it appears especially important to trace on the basis of the experience of the Ruhr, the causes of the absence of big economic strikes in Germany during the past year despite the growing acuteness of all the class contradictions.

In the first half of 1931 the C.P. of Germany and the Red Trade-Union Opposition of the Ruhr Province had a series of remarkable successes. They independently conducted a big miners' strike in January, 1931, and in connection with this struggle created the all-German Red union of miners. The factory committee elections in March and April, 1931, revealed the growth of the political influence of the Party and of the Red Trade-Union Opposition in the factories: the Red tickets received in 120 mines 68,324 votes against 35,262 at the previous elections, while the Social-Democratic and reformist trade unions lost 26,000 votes. These elections showed that the masses approved of the policy of the Party and revolutionary trade-union opposition in the January strike, as well as of the creation of a Red union.

Since then the strike struggle in the Ruhr has been marked by a steady decline. In October, 1931, the Party and the Red union succeeded in leading in the fight against the 7 per cent. wage cut only scattered groups of miners (about 25,000-30,000 on the whole) and keeping them in the strike for only a few days. In January, 1932, the Communist Party of Germany and the Red Trade-Union Opposition of the Ruhr mobilised an even smaller number of miners against Brüning's emergency decree, only a few thousand miners striking for one or two days in six mines. This decline of the strike movement in the Ruhr has been accompanied by a retardation of the growth of the political influence of the Party (and even by its weakening) and by stagnation in the Party organisations, in the Red miners' union and in the revolutionary trade-union opposition of the Ruhr province. In the elections to the Prussian Landtag last April the C.P. of Germany polled in the Ruhr (Westfell-North and South) 25,000 votes less than in the Reichstag elections of the autumn of 1930, not to mention the fact that it failed to capture the 80,000 votes lost by the Social-Democratic Party during this period. The Fascists (Nazi) who gained 380,000 votes chiefly at the expense of the bourgeois parties, became the second strongest Party (next to the Centre) in this proletarian region.

One of the main causes of the temporary discontinuation of the growth and partial decline of the influence of the Party among the masses of the Ruhr consists in that the C.P. of Germany and the Red Trade-Union Opposition failed to organise the workers' resistance to the lowering of their living standards.

During the past year the situation of the Ruhr miners has been steadily deteriorating. According to the "Gewerkschaftsarchiv" (January, 1932), the wages of a miner working full time

and receiving full rates amounted on the average to the following:

	Skilled	Unskilled
1929/30	120.8 marks	75.7 marks
January, 1931	114.3 ,,	71.9 ,,
November, 1931	105.8 ,,	66.4 ,,
January, 1932	95.2 ,,	59.8 ,,

The actual monthly wages of a Ruhr hewer, that is of a skilled miner, are shown in the following figures:

In July, 1931, a hewer received for	
20 1/5 shifts	162.74 marks
Plus the "family allowance" ...	5.26 ,,
Total	168.00 marks

The following deductions were made:

Insurance	23.02 marks
The wage tax and the "crisis tax"	4.05 ,,
Repairing instruments	2.55 ,,
Total:	29.62 marks
Rent	38.05 ,,
Total:	67.67 ,,
Remainder for living expenses ...	100.33 marks

Already in January, 1931, the wages of this worker were reduced by 11.31 marks (before January he earned 174.05 marks). The wage cut in October, 1931, and the reduction of the "family allowance" by six pfennigs further reduced his wages by 9.72 marks per month while the wage cut under the fourth emergency decree issued in January, 1932, brought with it a new reduction of wages by 15.02 marks.

It is necessary to remember that a large proportion of the miners have 4-5 free shifts per month amounting to a loss of 30-35 marks out of the monthly wages. According to the newspaper of the Christian Union of Miners, in February, 1931, the average number of free shifts per miner in the Ruhr amounted to 3½ per month. During the succeeding months this figure did not decrease but actually increased.

In the budget of many of the workers of the "Thyssen" mine there are references to cuts in the monthly wages by 10-15 marks effected in the summer and autumn of 1931 through transfers to lower wage groups. This is a very widespread practice of cutting wages in the Ruhr. In this connection the "Ruhr Echo" writes:

"In the mining industry for instance, the situation is such that the employers reduce certain groups of workers to lower grade scales. Such examples have taken place not only in the mining industry in which there are about 30 different rates, but also in the other industries."

The organisation of the struggle of the Ruhr miners against this pressure of the employers upon their living standards has unquestionably met with a number of objective difficulties.

The first of these is the existence of a huge army of unemployed and the constant growth of this army. The total number of miners employed in the Ruhr decreased between December, 1929, and January, 1931, from 382,331 to 290,313. This means that 92,498 miners were dismissed in the course of one year. Between January and July, 1931, to January, 1932, between 20,000 and 25,000 more miners lost employment. The fear of the employed workers losing their jobs in consequence of a strike plays a definite part in the organisation of the economic struggle.

Another difficulty is presented by the ever-growing terror of the police, employers and Fascists against the strikers which leads in each strike to the purging of the mines from the most militant revolutionary workers. In a speech delivered at the meeting of the all-German Committee of the revolutionary trade-union opposition in March, 1932, the Chairman of the Red Miners' Union stated:

"We have no less than 4,000 functionaries who have been victimised while thousands have been discharged this year. There are places in which the Red shop-committee members have been dismissed five times in succession. . . . Complete pit groups (of the Union and Red opposition) have been thrown out of the mines, not once, but several times" (Stenogram, page 311).

The slight reduction of the prices of consumers' goods, while lagging far behind the wage cuts, still enabled the employers and the trade-union bureaucrats to lull the miners by talk of "preserving the real standard of living despite the wage cuts."

A characteristic thing about the price movement is the fact that the prices of bread, potatoes and sugar, which hold an important place in the budget of the poorly-paid workers not only did not go down, but actually went up.

The basic difficulty in the organisation of the miners' struggle consists of the extensive influence of the Reformist and Christian trade-union bureaucracy, who seek by all means (by skilful manœuvres and open strike-breaking) to keep the miners from taking part in the struggle and who broke the strikes whenever they did occur. The Reformist union of miners has about 40,000 members in the Ruhr, while the Christian union has about 30,000 members (the membership of the Red union in the Ruhr amounting to 16,000). In all the strikes of the miners during the past period—in the general strike of 1931, in the October strike of the same year and in the January movement of 1932—the Reformist and

Christian trade unions of miners proclaimed the strikes to be "outlawed" and urged their members to continue to work. Their tactics in breaking up the strikes we shall deal with further on. on.

Experience has shown that all these difficulties can be overcome (the January strike of 1931, the extensive strike movement of the miners in Poland and Czecho-Slovakia where the biggest of these difficulties also exist) and that the sharpening of the class contradictions in Germany creates additional opportunities for the development of the struggle of the masses (the growth of the discontent among the workers, the growing fermentation among the members of the Reformist and Christian trade unions, the class solidarity and activity of the unemployed, the unceasing pressure of the bourgeoisie which again and again stimulates the workers towards militant resistance, etc.). The most important cause of the decline of the class struggle in the Ruhr during this period is to be found in the weaknesses of the subjective factor—of the Party, Red trade-union and revolutionary trade-union opposition of the Ruhr valley.

The main weaknesses of the Party and of the Red Trade-Union Opposition as displayed in the economic struggle in the Ruhr since the XI Plenum of the E.C.C.I. are as follow:

a. The insufficient political initiative and political aggressiveness towards the enemy (instead of an independent choice of the time for the struggle as was the case in January, 1931, they wait for the blows and manœuvres of the employers; instead of a political offensive against the Social-Democrats and the Reformist trade-union bureaucracy (whose position has been even less tenable by their support of Brüning and the introduction of wage cuts), defence against their manœuvres.

b. The incorrect methods of preparation for and leadership of the struggle (schematism, regimentation, the absence of the united front from below, an incorrect approach to the Reformist and Christian workers; preparations from above, instead of at the places of work).

c. The incorrect methods of the leadership of the Red Miners' Union by the Party organisation (petty appraisal, supplantation, etc.).

d. The opportunist fluctuations in the estimation of the importance of partial strikes and on the question of the general strike.

e. The weakness of the entire mass work in the mines and pits, the weak connection with the masses.

f. The practically complete absence of work in the Reformist and Christian trade unions (the liquidation of the groups of the Red Trade-Union Opposition in the mines, etc.).

In January, 1931, the trade-union opposition organised a strike of 60,000 miners, against the 12 per cent. wage cut demanded by the employers. During this period no Red Union of Miners existed in the Ruhr, while the Red Trade-Union Opposition among the miners had only 4,000 members. What made the organisation of that strike possible? First of all, the fact that the Red Trade-Union Opposition seriously prepared for the strike, most of the preparatory work being carried out in the mines. In its report on the preparation for the struggle the all-German leadership of the Red Trade-Union Opposition of the miners, wrote:

"The preparation for the miners' strike began in June, 1930 . . . About 1,000 meetings were held in the mines (from December 9, 1930). The "Ruhr Echo" devoted a page every day to the miners' struggle under the heading "The Mines are Prepared to Fight," this page containing reports of the Central Committee for the Preparation of the Struggle. This page was published separately every day in 5,000 copies and distributed in 134 mines and was also posted in the workers' villages and in the streets leading to the pits. . . .

"Preparatory committees of struggle were set up in 101 mines. . . . About 50 of them carried on their work every day.

. . . "In 30 mines programmes of demands were worked out at general meetings which helped to mobilise the miners."

Further, the fact that the Party was mobilised for the preparation and conduct of the struggle:

"The C.P. of Germany ably supported the preparation for the struggle. By calling special Party conferences locally and meetings of the groups the Party was mobilised down to its last organised unit." (From the same report).

Then there was the fact that the Red Trade-Union Opposition, basing itself upon the connection with the masses in the mines established during the period of the preparation for the struggle, succeeded in completely retaining the initiative of fixing the date of the struggle, following the correct policy of taking the enemy by surprise.

"On December 12, the conference (of mine delegates) adopted a decision that the signal to strike will consist of a notification of the Central Committee of Struggle to the effect that the fight is to begin. This decision was necessary in order to catch the enemy unawares and prevent him from taking counter measures" (report of the all-German leadership of the Miners' Red Trade-Union Opposition).

This decision was discussed at the general mine meetings.

By displaying considerable initiative and carrying on mass preparatory work the Red Trade-Union Opposition succeeded in quickly reacting to the manœuvres of the trade-union bureaucracy.

The leadership of the miners' Reformist trade union at first responded to our strike preparations by the statement that "at a time of a crisis it is impossible to advance wage demands and decide upon the cancellation of the wage agreement." (From the same report). However, when the Red Trade-Union Opposition declared at the mine meetings that this means that the trade-union bureaucracy is prepared to accept a wage cut the Reformist leadership, confronted with the growing strike sentiments among the workers, carried out a manœuvre; after the wage agreement had been annulled by the employers the Executive Committee of the reformist union of miners put forward the demand for a 50 pfennig wage increase and a seven-hour shift. The Red Trade-Union Opposition then withdrew its demands for a wage increase of one mark and a six hour shift declaring that in the interests of unity in the struggle it was prepared to fight for the demands advanced by the Reformist trade union, being confident that these demands could be secured only by means of a strike. Since the Reformist leadership naturally did nothing to prepare for a struggle for its own demands, this manœuvre was exposed by the Red Trade-Union Opposition before the masses.

All this made it possible for the Red Trade-Union Opposition to mobilise the workers for the strike on its own record. On January 2, even before the negotiations between the employers, the trade unions and the arbitration bodies for a reduction of the wages led to any definite decision, to their complete surprise, a strike was declared in 32 mines. On January 3, 53 mines were on strike (37 completely and 16 partially). The decision to open the strike was adopted on January 1 at a conference of mine delegates and was confirmed in the morning of January 2, at the pit meetings which added to the former demands the following:

"The immediate cancellation of all dismissals; the mine administrations must undertake not to reduce the wages; for giving work to the unemployed"

These demands were immediately presented to the administration.

"The workers' meetings (held in the morning of January 2) authorised the committees of struggle immediately to open negotiations with the administration of the mines and pits. Up to the completion of the negotiations the workers remain at the meetings held in the washing rooms. In case the demands should be rejected the strikes would begin at once." (Ibid).

The power of the Red Trade-Union Opposition in the organisation of this strike consisted in that it did everything in the closest contact with the masses of miners. This contact was maintained during the days of the strike as well.

"Strikers' meetings were held daily . . Between the Central Strike Committee numbering 80 members which was elected at the conference of January and which included Social-Democratic and Christian workers . . . and the district and mine strike committees' constant connections were maintained through messengers and instructors. . . . Despite the unprecedented police terror there were mass strike pickets . . . in which the unemployed took an active part. . . . Where, owing to the police terror, it was impossible to picket the mines the strike committees organised pickets in the mining villages. . . . During the days of the strike the masses were on the streets."

The political initiative, the activity and the mass preparations created the conditions for the organisation and conduct of the strike against the will of the trade-union bureaucracy and made it possible to attract more than 62,000 miners into the struggle despite the savage terror. The Government hastened to issue the compulsory arbitration award cutting the wages by 6 per cent. (the employers demanded an 8 per cent. wage cut in the last negotiations while the Reformist trade-union bureaucracy agreed to a 4 per cent cut. From January 6 the strike began to decline and several days later came to an end. Upon the conclusion of the strike a Red Union of Miners was organised at a conference of mine delegates.

The January strike of 1931, in the Ruhr, could unquestionably have served as a point of departure for the development of the economic struggle in the Ruhr and throughout the country. It could not but have stimulated the growth of militant sentiments among the workers and the strengthening of the prestige of the Red Trade-Union Opposition among the masses. This should have been ably utilised with a view to the changing situation. However, neither the Party, the newly-created Red Union, nor the Red Trade-Union Opposition, did this.

It is necessary to note that already in this generally well-prepared and well-conducted strike a number of weaknesses were demonstrated which subsequently were particularly aggravated. The most important of these was the narrow base of the united front from below. Of the 101 preparatory committees of struggle only 47 proved

to be real organs of the united front. The other 54 committees did not succeed in leading their mines in the struggle chiefly owing to the fact that they were founded upon a very narrow basis and were passive. The Red Trade-Union Opposition succeeded in gaining very little support among the Reformist and Christian workers in the strike; the big conferences held during the preparation for the struggle, such as the conference held on July 6, 1931, with the participation of 720 members, were attended by only 3 Social-Democrats and one Christian worker. Even at the conference held during the strike (January 1) there were among the 800 delegates from the mines only 36 members of the Reformist union, 12 members of the Christian union and 4 Fascists. There were also cases of none but members of the Party and Red Trade-Union Opposition joining the strike. In a letter on the strike it was reported, for instance, that "there have been such cases as 10 or 30 comrades alone leaving the mine, believing that in this way they were supporting the miners' struggle."

To overcome these weaknesses and, with a view to the experience of the successfully-organised mass strike, to develop a great struggle of the miners against all further pressure upon their living standards—such was the task.

To do this it was necessary first of all to take into consideration the changed methods of the enemy. At the end of 1930 the German bourgeoisie started an offensive all along the front upon the wage rates of the workers after the super-tariff rates had already been reduced. Having met with resistance on the part of the Berlin metal workers in November, 1930, and of the Ruhr miners in January, 1931, the employers took up highly diverse forms of lowering the standards of life.

In the Ruhr constant dismissals and transfers of workers to lower grades have been practised in the mines ever since the spring of 1931. In June, the so-called "family allowances" were reduced while the working day was lengthened.

Ever more extensively, beginning with Waldenburg and spreading to all the other mine fields, the so-called "Krimper-system" began to be employed involving the replacement of the workers for two or three months with the subsequent re-employment of the former workers, thus establishing turns between the employed and unemployed workers. Every time that one set of workers was replaced by another the number of workers was reduced and the piece rates were cut.

As regards discharges, up to 40,000 miners lost employment during the first half of 1931 alone.

Under these new conditions the Party, the Red Trade Union and the Revolutionary Trade-Union Opposition did not concentrate their attention upon the organisation of the workers' struggle in the mine against the new forms of lowering their living standards. The entire Party and trade-union press ("Ruhr-Echo," "Grubenarbeiter") wrote about preparing for the coming "fight of 500,000" (that is miners and metal workers) while it was necessary to develop the struggle at the places of work without any delay. The abstract directions about preparing "a fight of 500,000" distracted the organisations from the concrete struggle of the day. For the first 7-8 months of 1931 the partial struggle in the shops was practically neglected.

This situation was due to the weak connection with the shops and to the underestimation of the importance of the partial strikes.

As regards the partial strikes, the Chairman of the Miners' Red Union had to note as one of the biggest weaknesses of this period:

"The underestimation of the importance of the partial strikes: Our comrades had the idea that a successful struggle is possible if there is "firing all along the line." (Comrade Funk's article in "Ingewerkspress," No. 81, 1931).

The Red Union of Miners, which during this period built up its pit groups, thus developed without connection with the concrete struggle in the pits, without connection with the defence of the every-day needs of the workers, with their protection against dismissals and with the various forms by which their living standards were lowered.

The failure to protect the daily needs of the workers in the pits during this whole period constitutes the main reason of the setbacks in October and in January, 1932. For it was precisely during this period that the Red Trade Union and the Red Trade-Union Opposition could and should have gained the confidence of the workers and brought the workers into motion by organising hundreds and thousands of strikes in the mines, protest strikes, demonstrations, etc., could have unquestionably scored victories in hundreds of cases and thus best prepared for mass strike struggles. To Comrade Dahlen's question of why the workers in the Ruhr did not strike in January, 1932, when they were called upon to strike by the Red members of the factory committees and why they did not defend the factory committee members against being arrested, he received from a miner the following reply:

"During the last year and a half the piece rates in the mine have been reduced in several stages from 2 marks to 87 pfennigs without resistance on the part of the Red Trade Union, without resist-

ance on the part of the Red factory committee members. The workers do not feel confident that this time the Red Trade Union Opposition and the Red Trade Union will act any better in case of a wage cut." (Stenographic report of the Enlarged Plenum of the all-German Committee of the Red Trade-Union Opposition held March 2, 1932).

Without a consideration of this factor it is difficult to determine correctly the cause of the declining tendency of the economic struggle in the Ruhr since the January strike of 1931. During these months, when the employers conducted a systematic attack upon the workers in the mines and pits while the Red Trade Union and the Red Trade-Union Opposition remained passive they lost the initiative in the struggle and the connection with the masses which they had in the January strike of 1931.

* * * *

In October, 1931, the employers in the mining industry again took up an offensive along a wide front, demanding a 12 per cent. wage cut. Remembering the experience of the January strike of 1931, they now made every preparation to attack the workers unexpectedly and take them by surprise. For this purpose they first of all agreed with the trade-union bureaucracy not to talk "too much" about the annullment by them of the wage agreement and their intention to cut wages by 12 per cent. When this demand of the employers became known from the words of the Secretary of the Christian Union, Recklinghausen, the Red Union issued in August an appeal to the workers to be ready to strike. The new demand for a wage cut aroused a wave of indignation in the mines and pits. This was reported by the bourgeois newspapers, such as the "Hessische Landeszeitung" of September which wrote: "The danger which threatens us (from the possible strike in the Ruhr) is greater to the State and business than the currency prices in London." Immediately the employers and trade-union bureaucrats started manœuvring. The latter issued a denial that any "wage cut and a cancellation of the wage agreement are impending." The entire bourgeois press, inspired by the Employers' Association, published the statement that the Reichskanzler intended to prolong by means of an emergency decree the existing wage agreement, many of the bourgeois newspapers, for greater effect, wrote about the "grave position of the miners." The Red Trade Union and the Red Opposition did not properly react to the employers' manœuvres, and according to the report of the union leadership "the strike sentiments during this period—in the middle of September — had subsided." This means, in effect, that the work of the Red Union and of the Trade-Union Opposition of preparing for a struggle was temporarily weakened. The employers secured what they wanted; namely, they gained time. The decision of the arbitration court to cut wages by 7 per cent. came as a complete surprise to the workers. A fresh wave of discontent developed. The organ of the Reformist Union of Miners "Bergbauindustrie," No. 41, wrote as follows:

"The arbitration award of a 7 per cent. wage cut aroused great indignation among the miners and had it not been altered the Communist tactics of putsches and strikes would have been more successful."

However, it was not so much the change of the arbitration award which came during the strike itself, as the manœuvres of the Reformist trade-union bureaucracy, and our own weaknesses which decided the failure of our strike slogan. The Reformist leadership carried out a series of big manœuvres. They knew very well what a mass miners' strike in October would have meant to the development of the class struggle in Germany during the coming winter, the worst in a hundred years. In very radical language the trade-union bureaucrats opposed this new wage cut, while declaring at the same time that:

"Isolated strikes will not achieve the object, the workers must be prepared for a general strike unless the unbearable policy of cutting wages by 7 and 10 per cent. is discontinued." (From the speech of a member of the Executive of the Reformist Union in Bohum).

They called union membership meetings in some parts of the Ruhr valley, which they had not done before, and declared there as well that the trade unions at the necessary moment will issue a call for "big action," that in the meantime it is important "not to divide up the forces." Only at a few of the meetings, according to the Reformist "Bergbauindustriezeitung," did the Communists come out with a call for a strike. The "Ruhrecho" and "Grubenarbeiter" did not even report these meetings.

The Red Trade Union and the Trade-Union Opposition did not succeed in at once exposing this manœuvre. On the contrary, our functionaries themselves fell into the trap. About the sentiments "for a general strike" Comrade Funk wrote as follows:

"The general strike is the only weapon against the wage robbers, this tendency prevails not so much among the miners as among a section of our functionaries." (See "Ingewerkspress" of November 3, 1931).

Another important manoeuvre of the Reformist trade-union bureaucracy at this moment was the slogan of the "united front of the trade unions."

On October 1, all the Reformist and Christian newspapers published an appeal by all the trade unions (of the all-German Federation of Trade Unions, the Christian and the Hirsch-Dunker organisations) calling for "united action."

Our Press in the Ruhr practically failed to react to this demagogic trick of the Reformists

Already after the arbitration award has been announced the Executive of the Reformist Miners' Trade Union carried out a new manœuvre; namely, it sent a telegram to the Ministry of Labour asking that the arbitration award should not be made compulsory. They gave great publicity to their "action," and since the Red Union and the Trade-Union Opposition proved themselves to be quite helpless in the face of the Reformist manœuvres in all the weeks preceding the strike, this manœuvre also had its effect.

"When the Red factory-committee members spoke to the miners in the wash-rooms on the first day of the strike they heard on all sides the reply: "Let us wait and see whether the award will be made compulsory."

While the employers and the trade-union bureaucrats displayed a large variety of manœuvres the Party organisation, the Red Union and the Revolutionary Trade-Union Opposition displayed, despite their apparent activity (appeals, long appeals, to struggle in the Press), extremely limited initiative. The mass preparation in the mines was much weaker than it was in January. Most of the work consisted of proving that a reduction of wages was inevitable and of a weak defence against the manœuvres of the employers and trade-union bureaucracy. The actions and statements of the Reformists (the demand not to make the arbitration award compulsory, "the united front of the trade unions," "the general strike" in the future) rather than our slogan of the strike, rather than our demands (the wages to remain at the pre-January level, a seven-hour shift with equal wages, etc.) served as the main subject of discussions among the workers. This was a result of our weak initiative and insufficient mass preparation. The choice of the moment for the declaration of the strike followed the same line, it was declared immediately after the publication of the arbitration award. The employers who had expected the strike to be declared just then appointed at the last moment free shifts during these days in the biggest mines. Thus, these mines were excluded from the strike.

Altogether about 20,000 workers struck in the Ruhr and about 10,000 in the other regions (Upper Silesia, Waldenburg), the strike lasting only a few days. The Government issued a decision to reduce the workers' contributions to insurance by $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. so that the wage cut amounted to $3\frac{3}{4}$ per cent.

A most important factor responsible for the weak extent of the strike was the insufficient organisation of a united front with the Reformist workers and influence of the Reformist trade union.

"The workers of 60 mines discussed in the morning (of the day when the strike was declared) in the wash-rooms the question of the strike. Under the influence of the Reformist factory committee members they went down into the mines." (Sefkov at the Plenum of the All-German Committee in October, 1931).

This fact strikingly reveals that the members of the Party and of the Red Trade-Union Opposition during the preparatory period did not raise within the Reformist trade unions the question of the strike before the Reformist workers, before the lower Reformist functionaries, that no attempt was made to break through to them, that previously the question was not put point blank to the Reformist factory committees and to the lower Reformist trade union organisations of what they would do in case of a wage cut and a declaration of a strike against it. This not having been done the Reformist workers and functionaries had to decide at the last moment whether they were to go against their own union together with the Red Opposition or they were to submit to the decisions of the union. It was clear that to convince them at the very last minute, without preliminary systematic work with them, that it was necessary to go against their leadership, was a difficult task.

During the strike the Party organisations and the Red Opposition committed left-sectarian and right-opportunist mistakes. In a number of mines the attempt was made to replace the mass preparation by leading into the strike only the advanced workers, the members of the Party and of the Red Union.

A grave error and an expression of dismay and political disorientation during the strike was the communication sent to the Ruhr leadership of the German Federation of Trade Unions, — on the third day of the strike when it was already on the point of collapse, — proposing a joint struggle.

Another serious right-opportunist mistake was the direction issued by the leadership of the Red Trade-Union Opposition to all the Red shop committees to send to Brüning resolutions of protest against the wage cut.

All this represents an attempt to replace the real political initiative, the leadership and mass work by top machinations and the decreeing of strikes (calling out only the union members, etc.),

this being a result of the weak connection existing between the organisation and the factories, of the lack, for a number of months following the XI Plenum of the E.C.C.I., of every-day work of protecting the interests of the workers.

* * * *

All the weaknesses in the work of the Party, Red Trade Union and Revolutionary Trade-Union Opposition of the Ruhr were revealed in the most concentrated form in the January movement of 1932 opposed to the emergency decree of the Brüning Government, which provided for a 10-15 per cent. wage-cut for all the workers.

The preparation for the movement against the emergency decree was preceded by two important Plenums of the All-German Committee of the Red Trade Union Opposition in September and at the end of October, 1931. In September, the C.C. of the C.P. of Germany published the resolution of its Politbureau dealing with the weaknesses of the Party in the organisation of the economic struggle. This resolution and the decisions of the Plenums of the All-German Committee (the resolution of the October Plenum of the Red Trade-Union Opposition) subjected to just criticism the weaknesses in the organisation of the united front from below, in the preparation of the strikes, in the work at the factories and within the Reformist trade unions. They contained essentially correct suggestions as to the measures necessary to overcome these weaknesses. The regional leadership of the Party organisation and of the Red Trade-Union Opposition of the Ruhr fully endorsed these decisions. Here it is necessary to state that when a concrete case arose necessitating clear self-criticism on the part of the Party organisation and the Red Trade-Union Opposition regarding the estimation of the October strike, this self-criticism was entirely insufficient. The resolution of the regional committee of the Party on the lessons of the October strike, while pointing out a number of important defects, estimated the strike as a "success" and a step forwards. The experience of the January movement of 1932 in the Ruhr shows that the lessons of the October strike, the instructions of the R.I.L.U. and the decisions of the leadership of the C.P. of Germany and of the Red Trade-Union Opposition in the Ruhr had not been assimilated and carried out.

In the first place it is necessary to note that the emergency decree aroused tremendous indignation among the workers of the Ruhr. In a letter to the C.C. of the C.P. of Germany dated December 29 the Ruhr Regional Committee wrote:

"The strike movement against the emergency decree in the mining industry will have greater proportions than the first independent strike after the Fifth Congress held in January, 1931."

This was based firstly upon the very militant sentiments of the workers and secondly upon the efficient preparation for the strike. The former was true. That the workers' sentiments were highly militant is shown also by the report of the instructor of the C.C. and by the statement of Comrade Dahlen who happened to be in the Ruhr Province at that time, that:

"In January and October, 1931, Husemann was still able to put up against us in the Ruhr fighting corps, the workers affiliated to the Reformist trade unions marched solidly, sometimes armed and protected by the police, to the mines.

". . . In the January (1932) movement the masses of members of the free trade unions refused to do this . . ." (Stenographic Report of the Plenum of the All-German Committee, March, 1932).

Even judging by the Social-Democratic Press it is possible to note that moreover, even among the Reformist workers strike sentiments prevailed ("Bergbauindustriezeitung"), and it was precisely because of this that the Reformist trade-union bureaucracy resorted to a series of fraudulent manoeuvres. These militant sentiments, however, are far from tantamount to a readiness to respond immediately to the first strike call. The struggle had to be organised, prepared, it had to have perfectly clear slogans, mass work had to be conducted. None of this took place in the Ruhr. The assertion made in the letter of December, 29, about good preparation was a baseless phrase founded upon the hope that the militant sentiments would "of themselves" take the form of a strike movement.

The policy itself in the organisation of the January movement in the Ruhr was unclear. It consisted of the slogan of a mass political strike unconnected with the programme of partial economic demands. For this reason the factory demands which did exist during the October strike even if in a small number, were nearly totally absent.

"In the Ruhr district the mistake consisted in that the factory demands were completely overlooked, the political strike alone being advanced to the forefront as the slogan of action." (Stenogram of the Plenum of the Red Trade-Union Opposition, held in March, 1932).

The Press ("Ruhrecho," "Grubenarbeiter") and the meetings dealt only with a strike against Brüning. In the agitation conducted during this movement there was a great deal of talk and "strong expressions": "To crush," "To smash," "An unprecedented proletarian storm is develop-

ing," "A wave of labour anger is sweeping the Ruhr," etc. And in the shops the situation was as follows: 40 preparatory committees were supposed to have existed, but in reality there were only 22 and not one of them conducted systematic preparations for the struggle. The factory demands were not advanced, the workers in the shops were not prepared for the struggle. The entire mass preparation actually resolved itself into active agitation for a strike by the groups of unemployed who congregated before the shops, distributed leaflets, etc., and to active work on the part of a few union functionaries.

Having failed to submit the question before the workers, to see to the organisation of committees of struggle at the workers' meetings, the Central Strike Committee decreed the beginning of the strike.

"The Central Strike Committee decided in accordance with a previous resolution to begin the strike on Monday, January 4, all along the line. Upon the publication of this decision it was necessary to strain every ounce of energy for action. The shops which did not go on strike on Monday had to be brought out by the workers already on strike on January 5 and 6." (Announcement of the Central Strike Committee of January 3, 1932).

In order to give the workers courage the strike committee published in its bulletin on the previous day (December 26 and in No. 4) the statement that:

"On January 2, a great political mass strike begins in the Ruhr, in Berlin and in the decisive plants throughout Germany.

". . . It is already clear that things will develop into a great political mass strike."

Thus, the attempt was made to replace clear slogans and mass work by phrases and orders.

In a number of enterprises only the members of the Party and Red Union went on strike. A large number of Red factory committee members opportunistically retreated before the task of calling the workers on strike. The members of the Red shop committees of two pits refused to address the workers in the morning of the day of the strike declaration. In another pit a number of members of the Red shop committees arrived an hour or two late after the workers had already gone to work. The police terror in January was even more ruthless than in the October strike when the police occupied not only a number of mines but also the wash-rooms in which the miners usually meet in the Ruhr. The entire Ruhr was under martial law. It is characteristic of the way the workers reacted to the police terror that in two mines in which most of the workers had already decided to work, this decision was immediately reversed as soon as the wash-rooms were occupied by the police. The workers of these mines (Westerhold and Bergmannglück) drove the police out and went on strike. The total number of mines which responded to the strike call in the Ruhr in January was six while the number of strikers was approximately 3,000.

The executive committees of the Reformist and Christian Trade Unions came out against the strike and called upon their members "to go to work solidly and not to be provoked by the Communist terror and putschism." The Reformist trade-union bureaucracy again vigorously came out against the strike with the argument that it was necessary to avoid splitting the forces of the workers, that partial strikes would not lead anywhere. In this matter they were vigorously assisted by the "left" Social-Fascist Party of Seidewitz, the Brandlerites and the Trotzkists who maintained in unison that it was necessary to prepare for a general strike and to avoid dissipating the forces. Further, the Social-Democratic Party and the Reformist trade-union bureaucracy conducted a campaign for "lower prices," and urged that the emergency decree would bring a series of improvements to the workers (lower rents). The Ruhr newspapers of the Social-Democratic Party reported the emergency decree under the same caption as the "Vorwärts": "A reduction of wages, prices and rent." The press of the Communist Party, Red Trade-Union and unemployed committees somewhat vigorously exposed this manœuvre, convincingly arguing that the wages were cut much more drastically than the prices and that the price of bread was even increasing. However, in this agitation as well, things did not pass without schematism (the "Ruhr-Echo": "Consumers' goods have not been cheapened"). The next manœuvre of the Social-Democrats designed to dupe the workers was the introduction in the Reichstag of a Bill nationalising the mining industry. This manœuvre was accompanied by extensive agitation of the Reformists among the miners, the organ of the Reformist union of miners ("Bergbauindustriezeitung") stressing particularly that this was an "international action" in which the Reformist International of Miners participated. The exposure of this manœuvre by the Party and the Red Trade-Union Opposition was very weak. At first they failed altogether to react to this manœuvre and later they devoted a few articles to it, some of which exposed rather vaguely the deceitful character of this manœuvre (they did not contrast this manœuvre with our conception of nationalisation and did not oppose the Reformist demagogy by

concrete demands for the immediate improvement of the miners' conditions). A certain section of the workers were definitely influenced by the Reformist manœuvres. However, the biggest rôle in the failure of the January movement in the Ruhr was played by the mistaken slogans and the entirely incorrect methods of preparation and leadership of the struggle on the part of the Party organisation and Red Trade-Union Opposition of the Ruhr Province. That even the Reformists had counted on the possibility of a broader movement in January, 1932, is shown by the following statement published in the Social-Fascist "Vorwärts" after the January movement of 1932:

"When one thinks of the fact that these days not only among the miners but in every industrial region destitution is rampant, that everywhere the wage cuts lead to the belts being tightened another notch, it appears miraculous that the spark of the Communist strike slogan did not cause a fire."

* * * *

The methods of regimentation which were revealed with special acuteness in the movement of January, 1932, were not accidental. The relations between the regional Party leadership and the trade-union organisation in the Ruhr cannot be regarded as correct, they must be rebuilt on the basis of the experience of the movement during the past year.

In the January movement of 1932 the Union was completely overshadowed. The instructor of the C.C. of the Party writes that "The consolidated Union of miners does not appear on the scene because it is not allowed to do so."

This applies not only to this strike, in the entire daily work the Party organisations of the Ruhr not only advanced and decided but carried into effect questions (elections of the lower union managements, etc.) which represent part and parcel of the work of the Union itself.

It is quite obvious that the methods of regimentation and petty guardianship do not make for a development of initiative by the union organisations and their conversion into truly mass organisations.

The weak connection with the factories revealed in all the strikes of the past period is due to the fact that the pit groups of the Union carry on their work outside the pits.

"There, in the Ruhr, our pit groups have slid all along the line into the position of territorial groups. . . . Not only are their meetings held in the villages but the agenda of these meetings essentially consists of questions unconnected with the mine." (Stenogram of the Plenum of the Red Trade-Union Opposition, held in March 1932).

This serves as a reflection of the fact that the groups do not engage in their basic task, that of the organisation of the everyday struggle for their demands.

Worst of all is the condition of the work within the Reformist and Christian miners' unions. The experience of all the three strikes of 1931/32 in the Ruhr shows that the progress and result of the strikes are mainly decided by the position of the workers organised in the Reformist union. And it was a grave error to have liquidated the Red opposition groups in the mines after the foundation of the Red Union of Miners. The leading comrades of the Red Trade-Union Opposition themselves admit that with the foundation of the Union:

"The regional committee of the Red Trade-Union Opposition issued a circular stating: 'All the groups of the Red Trade-Union Opposition in the shops have ceased to exist, they must be transferred to the Red Union! . . . Already in February, 1931, there were no groups of the Red Trade-Union Opposition in the pits. (Stenogram of the Plenum of the R.T.U.O., March, 1932).

It may be confidently stated that had active groups existed within the Reformist Miners' Union during the preparation for the October strike we would have been able to capture a number of union meetings called to disrupt the struggle. We would have been able to lead to the struggle most of the 60 mines in which the workers hesitated to join the strike and where the decisive word was uttered by the Reformist factory-committee members. During the January movement of 1932, when the Reformist workers were in a state of the greatest indignation, it became particularly apparent that the absence of work within the Reformist union facilitates the trade-union bureaucracy in all their manoeuvres.

In the Christian union work had never been conducted and the position remains unchanged to this day.

The Party and the Red Trade-Union Opposition almost completely ignored the activity of the Fascists during these strikes. During the January strike of 1931 the Fascist leadership organised shock detachments against the strikers; during the October strike the Regional Committee of the National Socialist Party openly agitated against the strike. The C.P. of Germany did not react to this in any way. During the January movement of 1932 the Ruhr newspaper of the National Socialists published articles in the spirit of the Berlin "Angriff" urging fighting readiness "for the great retribution" and, like the Social-Fascists, containing warnings, against the "dissipation of the forces." According to the report of Comrade Dahlem:

"The Krupp management carried out the following manœuvre: on this day they put to work the so-called 'Nazi shift.' This is the shift among which the Nazis have the greatest influence." (Stenogram of the Plenum of the Red Trade-Union Opposition, March, 1932).

The Red Trade-Union Opposition and the Party did not react to this as well as to a number of similar factors despite the fact that they made possible an exposure of the demagogy of the Fascists among those workers whom they are trying to influence.

After the movement of January, 1932, the Ruhr organisation criticised many of the mistakes, particularly the underestimation of the organisation in the shops, of the workers' struggle for their daily needs. However, here, opposite mistakes were made. Thus, the editorial of the "Ruhr-Echo" on partial strikes said:

"Only the sum of many factory battles can develop into a general struggle whose political importance will grow powerfully with each new fighting factory."

Here is revealed the non-appreciation of the task of the organisation of the mass struggle for which the individual factory strikes represent the best preparation but which is not at all made up of the addition, of the "sum of the many factory battles."

This new mistake shows that the leading organs of the Party and of the Red Trade Union Opposition must help their Ruhr organisations both to correct their mistakes and to overcome the shortcomings in the concrete mass work.

The alteration of the methods of work, active work within the trade unions of the Reformist workers, a change of the approach to them, the overcoming of the view that "it is impossible to do anything with them anyway," courageous and concrete organisation of the united front with these workers and with the lower functionaries of the Reformist trade unions for joint struggle, an active struggle against the penetration of Fascists into the factories, a truly mass work in the defence of the interests of the workers in the factories—it is in this direction that the turn in the work of the Red Trade-Union Opposition must primarily be made.

THE MINERS' STRIKE IN CZECHO-SLOVAKIA AND ITS LESSONS

(*Continued from page* 329)

Hand," but support this Government on the principle of the "lesser evil."

This whole programme is presented rather undisguisedly in the speech of Klofac, the leader of the Czechish National Socialists, a confidante of Masaryk. He demands the end of the "Kerensky regime" which, in recent times, and especially during the mineworkers' strike, has ostensibly insinuated itself, recommends the appointment of a "War Cabinet" of quick action,—ostensibly for war against the crisis — and exposes his programme with the slogan of a "Second Republic," which is damnably similar to the Hitlerite slogan of the "third Reich."

Simultaneously with the rise of the struggle for economic partial demands, the Party begins a broad campaign of exposure of these plans which are closely linked together with the war preparations of the Czechish bourgeoisie, and for the mobilisation of the masses against capitalist dictatorship,—for the revolutionary way out of the crisis. And also here the fight for the reformist workers, the fight to win them over into the proletarian united front is a central question,—in full accord with the experiences and lessons given to us by the great miners' strike.

REVOLUTIONARY UNDERGROUND WORK

How Not to Prepare for Underground Conditions of Revolutionary Work.

O. WEBER.

A CIRCULAR has come into our hands which, several months ago, was addressed by the Central Committee of the Young Communist League in a certain country, to its district committees. In this circular a number of methods of control were suggested to local organisations in preparation for going into strictly underground conditions in the event of war. Among others, the following suggestions were made to the district committees: (a) All district committees must prepare special addresses; (b) they must inform the Central Committee within eight days exactly where the district committees can be found when they go underground; (c) that they must submit to the Central Committee within eight days the names and addresses of the deputy district secretaries who are to take over the leadership of district committees in the event of the arrest or conscription of the present secretaries. There were a few other instructions of a similar character.

In regard to this document the following observations must be made.

The authors of a document must be congratulated for the zeal they show in preparing the Young Communist League organisations for underground work in the event of war breaking out; but they must be pulled up sharply for this circular. Such things must never be written. There is no guarantee that such a document will not fall into the hands of the police, and if it does, will give the clue by which the police will be able to discover and break up the illegal organisations which will have been built up on the lines of the circular. Instructions on concrete organisational questions regarding preparation for underground conditions must be given only verbally and only by absolutely tried and trustworthy people. Only in extreme cases should instructions be given in writing and these should contain only the most general instructions and should be written in such a manner as to give the police no clue as to whom to look for and where to find them if the instructions do fall into their hands. The worst proposal of all in this circular is that the names and addresses of the deputy leaders of the local Y.C.I. committees should be sent to the Central Committee. This would give the police direct information. At the very least it should have been specified that these names and addresses be given strictly orally and by a trusted comrade. Sending such information by post should have been strictly forbidden under penalty of expulsion from the League. In the old days the Bolsheviks, it is true, did send secret addresses through the post. But it should be borne in mind that Russia is a much larger country than the one which we are now concerned with in connection with this circular. The vastness of the country made personal communication between Party organisations very difficult in Russia. Moreover, and this is very important to remember, the Russian Bolsheviks who carried on this work had had considerable experience in carrying on secret work; they knew how to use secret codes, invisible ink, etc., etc. Furthermore, they had a well-equipped, secret apparatus at their disposal.

A few remarks must be made concerning the so-called "deputy leaders" referred to by the authors in this unfortunate circular. Are such deputy leaders necessary? Obviously, in building up any kind of Party leadership (legal or illegal) that leadership must be so organised that in case a leading worker drops out, for whatever reason, another equally qualified member of the Party committee can take his place. To keep some of the best Party workers in reserve against the event of arrest of the Party leadership, as some illegal parties do, is an altogether different thing. When certain comrades are kept in reserve in this way, they are divorced from active Party work, they are put in "cold storage" as it were. Experience shows that this method of organisation is suitable only in two cases: (1) in times of big strikes and other great, mass revolutionary movements; but even in this case the method should not be applied to the Party committees but to the mass organs of struggle elected at such times. It is useful in such cases to have two or three emergency staffs for the militant committees, who, on the arrest of the first committee, can immediately take up its duties. (2) in time of war (imperialist war or civil war), when, in connection with impending military operations (or sudden mobilisation) it is necessary in good time to select several persons who shall give up regular Party work for a time and effectively conceal themselves in order that they may be available to carry on the Party work as soon as the Party organisation is disrupted by mobilisation or military operations. Incidentally, in preparing the Party organisations for imperialist wars, provision must be made for training working women and peasant women for work in

the leading Party and Y.C.L. organisations as well as for work in the illegal Party and Y.C.L. apparatus. In the course of the ordinary, everyday work of the legal parties, however, it is inexpedient to set aside special deputy leaders (let alone reserve committees or bureaux of committees). Why? Firstly, in view of the extreme shortage of leading workers in all Parties, it is very difficult, and sometimes impossible, to put tried and reliable, leading comrades out of action for a time. Secondly, even if it were possible to take a few leading workers from active work and put them into reserve, these comrades would become divorced from everyday Party work, would lose contact with it, and so would not be in the position to take over the duties of leadership when the contingency arose. Thirdly and finally, in case of a raid and the arrest of the members of the acting Party committee, these deputy leaders would inevitably have much difficulty in getting the necessary contacts with the illegal Party apparatus, with its cells and fractions working in the mass organisations under the leadership of the Party committees. Therefore, in the light of international experience, to ensure continuity in the work of the illegal Party committees, it is better in ordinary circumstances, instead of creating special reserves which would be kept in a state of inaction, to adopt the following organisational measures: (1) To remove immediately from active work all members of the Party committees (and particularly of Party Bureaux) who, it is believed, are being watched by the police, or who have been involved through the arrest of other comrades or through provocation. With all due precautions being taken, these comrades, whenever possible, should be sent to another town. (2) As a rule, work in the illegal Party apparatus should not be entrusted to the members of the Party committees but to special apparatus workers who must be effectively concealed and work under the guidance of the respective members of the Party committees as their direct assistants. (3) In case of the discovery and arrest of individual members of the illegal Party committee, these must be replaced at once by members appointed by the higher Party Committee as well as by co-opting members on the recommendation of the remaining committee members and particularly by active Party members nominated by the most important factory cells and fractions in important mass organisations. (4) Members of the Party committee (or members of the bureaux of Party committees) should not, as a rule, attend committee meetings or conferences or Party meetings all at the same time, so that in the event of the members attending the meetings being arrested, the members remaining at liberty can quickly restore the organisation and maintain continuity in the Party leadership.

ORGANISATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF POLAND.

In February this year, the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish Party took place at which a detailed resolution on the organisational problems of the C.P. of Poland was adopted. This resolution is an important document for the C.P. of Poland and for the whole of the Communist International. The C.P. of Poland has many important successes to record in 1931 in regard to the organisational consolidation of the Party. These successes are reflected in the doubling of the membership of the Party in 1931 (an increase of 107 per cent.) and particularly in the leadership of the strike movement. The statistics of the strike movement in Poland, which have already been quoted in the pages of the "Communist International," show that in the first quarter of 1931, 25 per cent. of the spontaneous strikes and 45 per cent. of all strikes ended in defeat for the workers, whereas in the fourth quarter of 1931, only nine per cent. of the spontaneous strikes and five per cent. of all the strikes ended in defeat. These figures show that the C.P. of Poland is now very closely linked with the masses of the proletariat and that it has learned to commence strikes and to bring them to an end at the opportune moment. The resolution adopted at the plenum of the C.P. of Poland points out that while there have been achievements in regard to organisation, serious organisational weaknesses have become revealed in the Party which are expressed primarily in the continued weakness of the factory groups. These are very serious and very true statements in the resolution on organisation passed by the Central Committee of the C.P. of Poland. The successful struggle against the capitalist offensive and against the war preparations of the imperialists can be organised only if the Party succeeds in establishing strong factory groups. The resolution of the February Plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P. of Poland enumerates the following reasons for the weakness of the factory groups in Poland: (1) The small number of factory groups and the tendency that is observed in the Party to deliberately restrict the membership of the factory groups to very small limits on the plea that it is necessary to maintain secrecy; (2) The factory groups are not sufficiently active, even during strikes. The resolution quotes cases when the driving force of strikes were the trade union departments of the respective Party committees, while the factory groups played hardly any rôle at

all; (3) The continuation within the Party of P.S.P. (Polish Socialist Party) and Bund (Jewish Social Democratic League) traditions regarding organisational questions (for example, the existence until recently, of separate Polish and Jewish groups, in spite of the repeated instructions of the Central Committee to dissolve such).

The resolution calls for a fight against this tendency in the Party to restrict the membership of the factory groups and points out that in order to maintain strictest secrecy, the factory groups should be organised according to shops, all shop groups to be subordinated to a leading Party body covering the whole factory. The resolution also calls for more detailed instruction to be given by the leading Party bodies to the factory groups. Both the proposals contained in the resolution on organisation passed by the Central Committee of C.P. of Poland are quite correct, but quite inadequate. We on our part would like to add the following:

Shop, shift and gang nuclei should be organised irrespective of the number of members in the factory nucleus. Party work in the factory should be commenced with the organisation of Party groups in the shops, shifts and gangs, in short in every unit of the factory where Party members are employed. Unless these Party groups are established it will be impossible to organise the work of the factory nucleus as a whole, as the instructions of the Comintern on work in the factories published in 1931 have already pointed out. In regard to the Party committees giving instructions to the factory nuclei we would add that these instructions must be serious and concrete to the highest degree. One of the principal reasons for the unsatisfactory nature of the work of factory nuclei is the bad internal organisation of the factory nucleus, one of the features of which is the absence of a proper division of labour among the members of the factory nucleus.

The Plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P. of Poland should have carefully discussed the instructions of the C.I. on work in the factories and should have adapted them to meet Polish conditions and at the same time should have suggested modifications for the internal structure of the factory nuclei. We would like to suggest the following plan for the division of labour within the factory nucleus: (1) The secretary of the factory nucleus. His functions should be to maintain contacts between the shop, shift and gang nuclei and with the individual comrades working in those shops where nuclei have not yet been established; maintain contacts with the Y.C.L. nucleus and with the respective Party committees; make arrangements for the meetings of the bureau of the factory nucleus, for meetings of the active workers in the factory and for general factory nucleus meetings. (2) A treasurer. (3) The leader of the factory newspaper who should also act as organiser of the distribution of Party literature in the factory. (4) A comrade to maintain contacts with the fraction in the trade union whose members are employed in the given factory and also to act as organiser of the trade union work in the factory.

The question of the structure of the factory nucleus is closely linked up with the question of the structure and methods of work of the Party Committees which guide the activities of factory nuclei. The resolution on organisation passed by the February Plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P. of Poland calls the Party's attention to two serious organisational weaknesses in the lower Party committees: (1) They are set up in a haphazard fashion; (2) in setting up these Party committees and in their work, the principles of internal Party democracy are not sufficiently adhered to. While these two statements are absolutely correct they are not sufficiently concrete. Admittedly difficult as the conditions are in Poland in view of the police régime, the Party must nevertheless see to it that all the leading bodies are elected at Party meetings (or Party conferences). Experience has shown that this is possible in Poland. The director of the organisational department of the Central Committee of the C.P. of Poland reported to the Comintern that in 1931 the C.P. of Poland organised several regional conferences at which numerous factory nuclei were represented. At these conferences all the important questions of Party life were discussed and not a single one of these conferences were discovered by the police. These facts support the claim that the Party committees of the C.P. of Poland must be elected committees. It goes without saying, of course, that in each separate case the election of the Party committee must be very carefully prepared and all the rules of secrecy must be very strictly observed.

The membership of the Party committees must be such that the members themselves will be able to maintain good contacts with the important factory nuclei and Party fractions in the important mass organisations. Hence, in preparing for the election of Party committees, a very careful selection of the candidates put forward by the organisations operating on these important sectors of the class struggle must be made. Experience in revolutionary underground work has shown that one of the best forms of carrying through the election of illegal Party committees is the following: (1) The Party conference (or general meeting) elects a small com-

mittee of from three to five persons consisting of the most trustworthy comrades (including a member of the higher Party committee). This committee takes a vote of the members by secret ballot and counts the vote. The committee reports the result of the election only to the representative of the higher Party committee and to the successful candidates. Provision must be made for the event of members dropping out from the illegal Party committee, for whatever reason, in the interval between Party conferences. In that event, they must be replaced in the manner suggested above without waiting for the next Party conference to be held. In the event of it being impossible to convene a Party conference for the election of a Party committee, then it would be best to form the latter with the aid of a higher Party Committee which appoints several members to form a small, strictly secret core of the Party committee to which elected representatives of the important factory nuclei and Party fractions in the important mass organisations should be added to complete the required number of committee men. Finally, the February Plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P. of Poland should have discussed the question of the internal structure of the Party committees. The resolution vaguely recommends that the work of the departments be improved. But of which departments? We would like to suggest the following plan for the division of labour within the illegal Party committee.

(1) A secretary, to act also as Party organiser. His function should be to maintain contact with the nuclei and local organisaions as well as with the higher Party bodies, and be responsible for preparing the agenda and proposals for the meetings of the bureau and of the plenum of the Party committee. In order to carry out these functions the secretary recruits a small body of active members to carry out the technical side of the work, for example: (a) a comrade to take charge of the records; (b) a comrade to write the correspondence, take charge of the secret code, etc. (c) a comrade to make arrangements for rooms for meetings, addresses for correspondence, etc.

(2) A treasurer, to act also as the organiser of all the financial affairs of the Party committe He, too, has a small body of helpers which ma include non-proletarian elements—intellectuals etc.

(3) One comrade must be in charge of the secret printing press and be responsible for the distribution of Party literature (legal, semi-legal and illegal).

(4) One comrade must be appointed to maintain contacts with the fractions in the variou legal and semi-legal organisations (trade unions co-operative societies, sports organisations, etc. operating in the area of the given Party orga isation. It should be the function of this comra also to assist the illegal apparatus of the Par committee in taking advantage of the variou legal and semi-legal opportunities.

(5) In those districts where military barrack are situated, a comrade must be appointed to lea a special apparatus for carrying on work amon the soldiers (soldiers' nuclei, contact with these nuclei, special literature, etc.). The fact that special apparatus has been set up for this wor does not relieve the general Party apparatus o the task of conducting mass anti-militarist work

(6) In connection with the development of th workers' and peasants' self-defence movemen in those districts where fair-sized factory an village workers' and peasants' defence corp already exist, a special instructor must b appointed as assistant to the secretary whos function shall be to lead this work. He mus carry on this work in close co-operation with th corresponding nuclei as part of the work o strengthening the organisational positions of th Party in the factories and among the agricultura labourers and poor peasants in the villages.

This suggested plan must under no circumstances be adopted mechanically. The question of separating or combining various functions in Party work must be decided after carefully weighing up the personal qualities of the members of the Party committee, their ability to lead this or that branch of Party work. For the purpose of carrying out any special task the Party committee may establish special temporary groups and committees.